

In 1857, a great 'Revolt' took place in India. It was a result of the character and practices of colonial administration after 1757 (**Battle of Plassey**). The cumulative effect of British expansionist tactics, economic exploitation, and administrative innovations had harmed every Indian — **rulers of Indian states, sepoys, zamindars, peasants, traders, craftsmen, gurus, maulvis, and so on**. Therefore, in 1857, the simmering anger erupted in a violent storm that rocked the British Empire in India to its very core.

## SEPOY MUTINIES BEFORE THE GREAT REVOLT OF 1857

Between 1757 and 1857, there were intermittent public eruptions in the form of **tribal movements, peasant uprisings, civil rebellions and sepoy mutinies**. Also, a number of sporadic military uprisings took place before the Great Revolt of 1857 in different parts of the country.

### SIGNIFICANT SEPOY MUTINIES

The most important mutinies which broke out during the pre-1857 period are the following:

- **Bengal Mutiny:** The mutiny of the sepoys in Bengal in **1764**.
- **Vellore mutiny of 1806:** The sepoys protested against interference in their social and religious practices and raised a banner of revolt unfurling the flag of the ruler of Mysore.
- **47th Native Infantry:** In 1824, the sepoys of the 47th Native Infantry Unit rebelled.
- **Assam:** In 1825, the **Grenadier Company** revolted in Assam.
- **Solapur:** In 1838, an Indian regiment mutinied at Solapur.
- Mutinies in the 34th Native Infantry, 22nd Native Infantry, 66th Native Infantry, and 37th Native Infantry in 1844, 1849, 1850, and 1852, respectively.

## CAUSES OF UPRISINGS

The sepoys were increasingly dissatisfied with British rule for the following reasons:

- **Discrimination in pay and promotions.**
- **Mistreatment of the sepoys by British officials.**
- **The government's refusal to pay foreign service allowance while fighting in remote regions.**
- Religious objections of the high-caste Hindu sepoys to **Lord Canning's General Service Enlistment Act (1856)**, which required all recruits to be ready for service both within and outside India.
- The sepoys **shared all of the civilian population's discontent and grievances**—social, religious, and economic.
- Over time, the **upper caste sepoys' religious beliefs had come into conflict with their service conditions. For Example,**
  - ♦ In 1806, the **replacement of the turban with a leather cockade** sparked a mutiny at Vellore.
  - ♦ In 1824, the **sepoys at Barrackpore revolted when they were asked to go to Burma** because crossing the sea would mean losing caste.
  - ♦ In 1844, the Bengal army sepoys revolted against **being sent to distant Sind**.

### Travelling by sea was a social Taboo

In those days, travelling by sea was a social taboo for higher caste Hindus, who referred to it as **Kala Pani**. It meant **losing one's caste**. Because of this, Indian sepoys had reservations about crossing the sea due to the Kala Pani taboo.

## REVOLT OF 1857

The revolt of 1857 was one of the most significant uprisings that took place against the colonial power in the 19th century. This watershed moment in



Indian history fundamentally altered the nature of British rule in the Indian subcontinent. Recognizing its significant contribution to challenging the exploitative rule of the British East India Company over the subcontinent, **VD Savarkar** referred to it as **India's First War of Independence**.

The revolt began on **10th May, 1857** when Indian soldiers working in the East India company rebelled at **Meerut**. Although it began as a military uprising and appears to be a great sequel in the long series of several mutinies, its causes were deeply rooted in the changing conditions of the times. It drew its strength from several elements of discontent against British rule.

The East Company had already won over both European Powers and regional powers like Marathas, Mysore, Awadh, Hyderabad, Bengal, Sindh, Nepal, Burma. The victory over Bengal in Battle of Plassey 1756 and Battle of Buxar 1764 made East India Company the political and economic hegemony of India. The Later Mughals remained only a symbol and the EIC became sovereign power by the end of 18th century. The policies of Ring of Fence, Subsidiary Alliance, Dual Government and Doctrine of Lapse brought more states under their influence.

Although the rampant corruption in the EIC brought the company on the edge of insolvency, it was helped by the British Authorities to limit the powers of the company through various **Charter Acts of 1771, 1784, 1813, 1833, 1854**. The revolts of **First Afghan War (188-42), Punjab Wars (1845-49) and Crimean Wars (1854-56)** caused serious losses to the British and exposed the weakness of the Britishers. There were a plethora of Political, administrative, socio-cultural, economic, religious, cultural and immediate factors which eventually culminated in this landmark event.

## **MAJOR CAUSES**

### **Political Causes**

Ineffective Policies like **Subsidiary Alliance and Doctrine of Lapse** revealed the British greed of increasing its own wealth or prestige or power.

- The Awadh soldiers who were a major part of the Bengal Army were disappointed with the **falling of Awadh to the East India Company due to the reason of maladministration in 1856**.
- **With Marathas**, the Britisher refused to pay pension to Nana Saheb-II who was the adopted son of Baji Rao-II.

The British never maintained their written or verbal promises of honoring the Mughal emperors. **For instance**, since 1803, the Mughal rulers have been protected by the British. However, the Britishers never honored and respected the Mughal Rulers. The word **humble servant appeared** on the seal of the Governor's General. On the death of Fakhruddin (Mughal Prince) in 1856, Viceroy Lord Canning declared that **Fakhruddin's successors would be stripped of their nominal dignity** and they would not be permitted to sit in the royal palaces. Mughals' **title sovereignty was also brought to an end** by the British.

India was ruled by a foreign nation. It meant that rulers of India were administering the country from **hundreds of miles away**. This was another major political issue that infuriated Indians against the British. Also, the Britishers were alien to the local people and were not mixed with the Indian culture and they mainly focused on extracting wealth from India.

### **Economic Causes**

**Artisans and handicrafts men:** The British policy discouraged Indian handicrafts and promoted British goods. The destruction of Indian handicrafts was not accompanied by the development of modern industries. Moreover, the annexation of Indian states by the Company cut off their major source of patronage (Indian rulers and kings). As a result, artisans and handicrafts men were forced to look for alternate sources of employment that hardly existed. Thus, the British rule meant **misery to the artisans and handicrafts men**.



**Ruin of Indigenous Industries:** The British strategy of promoting the **import of cotton goods from England** to India destroyed all Indian cotton textile businesses. These cotton goods were factory made goods and were produced in bulk. Therefore, it appeared cheaper than the hand made goods of the Indian artisans. India's handicrafts could not compete with those of England. Indian people preferred cheaper, factory made goods rather than costly hand made goods. British also imposed free trade in India and they use **to levy discriminatory tariffs against Indian goods** in Britain. As a result, India goods appeared costlier than British goods that affected their sales.

**Ruin of the Mercantile Class:** The British purposefully hampered Indian trade and commerce by levying **hefty tariffs on Indian commodities**. At the same time, **the import of British goods into India attracted low tariffs**, thus encouraging their entry into India. **For example**, By mid-nineteenth century, exports of cotton and silk textiles from India practically came to an end.

**Pressure on Land:** The collapse of Indian industry and trade rendered many people unemployed. A lack of other occupational opportunities forced these unemployed people to rely on the rural economy. As a result, millions of bankrupt artisans and craftsmen, spinners, weavers, smelters, smiths, and others from towns and villages had no choice but to engage in agricultural activities, putting a pressure on the land.

**Peasantry:** The peasantry were never really able to recover from the disabilities imposed by the new and a highly unpopular revenue settlement. The land **revenue demanded by the British kept on increasing**. Increasing demands for land revenue were **forcing large numbers of peasants into growing indebtedness or into selling their lands**. **For Example**, In Bengal, in less than thirty years land revenue collection was raised to nearly double the amount collected under the Mughals. The pattern was repeated in other parts of the country as British rule spread

**Discontent Among Zamindars:** Zamindars lost control over their land and its revenue. This was either due to the **extinction of their rights by the colonial state or by the forced sale of their rights over land** because of their inability to meet the exorbitant land revenue demand. The lands of Zamindars and Talukdars were **stolen and auctioned off to the highest bidder**. **For example**, In Awadh, 21,000 Taluqdars had their lands stolen leaving them without a means of income.

- In 1852, Lord Dalhousie ordered the **Inam Commission** to investigate the landlords' title papers. Those who **failed to present documentary proof of their property rights were stripped of their rights**.

**Economic Drain:** British soldiers, civil servants, and employees who worked in India used to receive the highest pay. Their **savings, pensions, and other profits from India were being sent to England in the form of wealth**.

## Socio-Religious Causes

**Racial overtones:** The British administration's attitude toward the native Indian population had racial overtones and a superior mentality. The British tried to create an inferiority complex by saying Indian texts **lacked scientific attitude**. After creating hostility among Indians about their text and culture, they injected western education by replacing the traditional education in India.

**Activities of Christian missionaries:** The activities of Christian missionaries who followed the British flag in India were looked upon with suspicion by Indians. Missionaries started spreading the superiority of Christian among Indians. These missionaries wanted to imbibe the western thought so that Indians would support the imperialist law and order.

**Socio-religious reform:** The attempts at socio-religious reform such as abolition of sati, support to widow-remarriage and women's education were seen by a large section of the population as **interference in the social and religious domains of Indian society by outsiders**.



**Social legislation to destroy their religion and culture:** The government's decision to tax mosque and temple lands and making laws such as the Religious Disabilities Act, 1856 created fear among the local people. The orthodox Hindus and Muslims feared that through social legislation the British were trying to **destroy their religion and culture**. **For Example**, declaring that a change of religion did not debar a son from inheriting the property of his 'heathen' father (**Religious disabilities Act, 1856**) was regarded by the Hindus as an incentive to give up one's religious faith.

### Military Reasons

The revolt of 1857 originated with Sepoy mutiny. The sepoys were mainly taken from the peasant population of North and North-West India. They joined the military to find a substitute living to decline their dependence on agriculture. They were paid around 7-9 rupees which included the price of their uniform, food and transport of their private baggage so they were left with very meagre pay for their survival. Furthermore, the Indian soldiers were abused and humiliated. The Indian soldiers were not promoted to the higher rank and were limited to the post of Subahdar.

The passage of the General **Service Enlistment Act** by Lord Canning made the soldiers to perform their duty anywhere required, even beyond the sea. Since crossing the seas at that time was considered to be loss of caste among Hindus, this caused disaffection of soldiers from the Britishers. Also, They were not given the **bhatta** (foreign service allowance) for serving in Sindh or in Punjab.

## THE BEGINNING OF THE REVOLT

### Immediate Cause

The immediate cause of the uprising was the **introduction of the 'Enfield' rifle by the company**. The sepoys in India believed that the cartridge of the ammunition used for the gun is greased with either cow fat or pig fat. The cow was worshipped

by Hindus and the pig was considered unclean and a sin to be consumed by Muslims.

Lord Canning attempted to make amends by withdrawing the offending cartridges, but the damage had already been done. There was unrest in a number of locations. In February 1857, **the 19th Native Infantry at Berhampore** (West Bengal), which refused to use the newly imported Enfield rifle and mutinied, was dissolved. **Mangal Pandey**, a sepoy in Barrackpore, refused to use the cartridge and attacked his superior officers in March 1857. On April 8, he was executed by hanging. On May 9, 85 soldiers in Meerut were sentenced to ten years in prison for refusing to use the new rifle. This sparked off a general mutiny among the Indian soldiers stationed at Meerut. On May 10, soldiers released their imprisoned comrades, killed their officers and unfurled the banner of revolt. They set off for Delhi.

### Choice of Symbolic Head

The released sepoys arrived at Delhi. In Delhi, the local infantry joined them, killed their own European officers including **Simon Fraser and seized the city. Lieutenant Willoughby, the officer-in-charge of the magazine at Delhi**, offered some resistance, but was overcome. Bahadur Shah Zafar was proclaimed the Emperor of India. **Delhi was soon to become the centre of the Great Revolt and Bahadur Shah (Mughal King), its symbol.**

### Significance of Symbolic Head

It signified that the long reign of the Mughal dynasty had become the **traditional symbol of India's political unity**. With this single act, the sepoys had **transformed a mutiny of soldiers into a revolutionary war**. Now all Indian chiefs who took part in the revolt hastened to **proclaim their loyalty to the Mughal emperor**. It also signified that the rebels were politically motivated. Though religion was a factor, the broad outlook of the rebels was not influenced by religious identity but by the perception of the British as the common enemy.



## Civilians Join the Sepoys

The revolt of the sepoys was accompanied by a rebellion of the civil population, particularly in the north-western provinces and Awadh. Their long-held complaints were quickly expressed, and they rose in force to voice their resistance to British authority. The **farmers, craftsmen, shopkeepers, day laborers, zamindars, religious mendicants, priests, and public servants** all participated in the revolt. This participation gave it actual power and the appearance of a popular uprising. The **peasants and petty zamindars** gave **free expression to their grievances** by attacking the **money-lenders and zamindars** who had displaced them from the land. They took advantage of the revolt to **destroy the money-lenders' account books and debt records**. Within a month after the rebels captured Delhi, the uprising had spread to **other regions of the country**.

## THE EPICENTERS OF THE REVOLT

**Delhi:** At Delhi, the nominal and symbolic leadership belonged to the Mughal emperor, **Bahadur Shah**, but the real command lay with a court of soldiers headed by **General Bakht Khan**. General Bakht Khan had led the revolt of Bareilly troops and brought them to Delhi.

**Kanpur:** At Kanpur, the natural choice was **Nana Saheb**, the adopted son of the last peshwa, Baji Rao II. Nana Saheb joined the revolt primarily because the British had taken away his pension.

Nana Saheb **expelled the English from Kanpur**, proclaimed himself the peshwa, acknowledged Bahadur Shah as the Emperor of India and **declared himself to be his governor**. The victory was short-lived. **Kanpur was recaptured** by the British after

fresh reinforcements arrived. Nana Saheb escaped but his brilliant commander Tantia Tope continued the struggle. Nana Saheb was then defeated at Kanpur and **escaped to Nepal in early 1859**.

**Lucknow:** Lucknow was the capital of the Awadh state. **Begum Hazrat Mahal**, Begum of the ex-king of Awadh, assumed command of the revolt. Her son, **Birjis Qadir**, was proclaimed the nawab. Henry Lawrence, the British resident, the European inhabitants and a few hundred loyal sepoys took shelter in the residency. The residence was besieged by the Indian rebels and **Sir Henry was killed during the siege**. Finally, **Sir Colin Campbell**, the new commander-in-chief, evacuated the Europeans with the help of Gorkha regiments. In March 1858, **Luknow was finally recovered by the British and the Begum** of Awadh was compelled to hide in Nepal.





**Jhansi:** Rani Laxmibai assumed the leadership of the sepoys at Jhansi. Lord Dalhousie had refused to allow her adopted son to succeed to the throne after her husband died, and had annexed the state by the application 'Doctrine of Lapse'. She battled valiantly against the British army, but the English eventually overpowered her. With the help of Tantia Tope (a close associate of Nana Saheb) she marched towards Gwalior and captured it. However, Rani Laxmibai died, and Gwalior was recaptured by the British in 1858. Tantia Tope escaped into the jungles of central India, but was captured while asleep in April 1859 and put to death.

**Bihar:** In Bihar, the revolt was led by Kunwar Singh, the zamindar of Jagdishpur. He had a grudge against the British who had deprived him of his estates. He unhesitatingly joined the sepoys when they reached Arrah from Dinapore (Danapur)

**Bareilly:** At Bareilly, Khan Bahadur, a descendant of the former ruler of Rohilkhand, was placed in command. He organised an army of 40,000 soldiers and offered stiff resistance to the British.

**Faizabad:** Maulvi Ahmadullah of Faizabad was another outstanding leader of the revolt. He fought a stiff battle against the British troops.

### Shah Mal

The sacrifices made by the common masses were immense and innumerable. The name of Shah Mal, a local villager in Pargana Baraut (Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh), is most notable. He organized the headmen and peasants of 84 villages (referred as chaurasi desh), marching at night from village to village, and urging people to rebel against the British hegemony.

The people attacked government buildings, destroyed the bridges over the rivers and dug up metal led roads—partially to stop government forces from coming into the area, and partly because bridges and roads were viewed as symbols of British rule. He also organised an effective network of intelligence for a short duration, the people of the area felt that the British rule was over, and their own rule had come. Unfortunately, in July 1857, Shah Mal was killed by an English officer, Dunlap.

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### SUPPRESSION OF THE REVOLT

The revolt was finally suppressed. The British captured Delhi on September 20, 1857 after prolonged and bitter fighting. Bahadur Shah was taken prisoner. The royal princes were captured and butchered on the spot, publicly shot at by

Lieutenant Hudson. Thus, the great House of Mughals was finally and completely extinguished. One by one, all the great leaders of the revolt of 1857 fell. Lord Canning declared peace on July 8, 1858, fourteen months after the outbreak at Meerut.

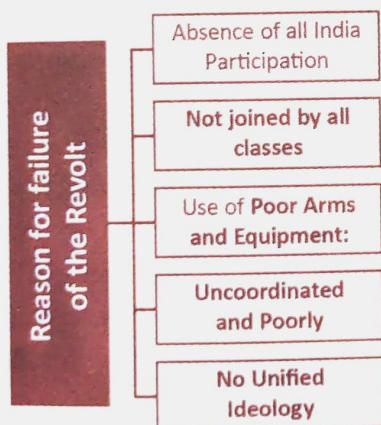
Places of Revolt	Indian Leaders	British Officials who suppressed the revolt
Delhi	Bahadur Shah II	John Nicholson
Lucknow	Begum Hazrat Mahal	Henry Lawrence
Kanpur	Nana Saheb	Sir Colin Campbell



Places of Revolt	Indian Leaders	British Officials who suppressed the revolt
Jhansi & Gwalior	Lakshmi Bai & Tantia Tope	General Hugh Rose
Bareilly	Khan Bahadur Khan	Sir Colin Campbell
Allahabad and Banaras	Maulvi Liyakat Ali	Colonel Oncell
Bihar	Kunwar Singh	William Taylor

## REASONS FOR FAILURE OF THE REVOLT

**All-India participation was absent:** Although the revolt was fairly widespread, a large portion of the country remained unaffected. The **eastern, southern and western parts of India remained more or less unaffected**. The large princely states, Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore, and Kashmir, as well as the smaller ones of Rajputana, did not join the rebellion. The southern provinces did not take part in it.



**Not joined by all classes:** Certain classes and groups did not join. Some in fact worked against the revolt. Money-lenders and merchants saw their class interests better protected under British patronage. **Educated Indians** viewed this revolt as backward looking, supportive of the feudal order. Zamindars of Bengal helped the British to suppress the revolt.

**Poor Arms and Equipment:** The Indian soldiers were **poorly equipped materially, fighting generally with swords and spears and very few guns**. The

European soldiers were equipped with the latest weapons of war like the Enfield rifle.

**Uncoordinated and Poorly Organised:** The rebels lacked coordination or central leadership. The principal rebel leaders—**Nana Saheb, Tantia Tope, Kunwar Singh, Laxmibai**—were no match to their British opponents in generalship.

**No Unified Ideology:** The rebels lacked a clear understanding of colonial rule; neither did they have a forward looking political perspective nor a societal alternative. The rebels **represented diverse elements with differing grievances and concepts of current politics**.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

For the British the Revolt of 1857 proved useful in that it showed up the shortcomings in the Company's administration and its army, which they rectified promptly. These defects would never have been revealed to the world if the Revolt had not happened.

For the Indians, the 1857 Revolt had a major influence, it brought out the open grievances of people and the sepoys, which were seen to be genuine. Though, it was also obvious that the old and obsolete arms were no match for the advanced weapons of the British.

In nutshell, the Revolt of 1857 did establish local traditions of resistance to British rule which were to be of help in the course of the national struggle for freedom.



### Different Views on the Revolt

- **R.C. Majumdar and S.N. Sen:** "Not an organised 'national' revolt"
- **R.C. Majumdar:** "Neither first, nor National War of Independence"
- **V.D. Savarkar:** "War of independence"
- **Eric Stokes:** "Elitist in character"
- **Lawrence and Seeley:** "Mere sepoy mutiny"
- **T.R. Holmes:** "A conflict between civilization and barbarism"
- **James Outram:** "A Mohammedan conspiracy making capital of Hindu grievances"

### Administrative Changes After 1857

After the revolt of 1857, the British Crown took over the powers from the East India Company through the Government of India Act 1858. The act transferred the government, territories and revenues from the Company to the Crown. The Act also declared that India was to be governed by and in the name of the Sovereign and also authorized the appointment of an additional Principal Secretary of State and created the Council of India.

#### 'Queen's Proclamation'

Direct rule of the British Crown was announced by Lord Canning at a **darbar at Allahabad** in the 'Queen's Proclamation' issued on November 1, 1858. It was by this proclamation that the governor-general acquired the additional title of 'Viceroy'.

### Administrative change

The Governor General's office was replaced by that of the Viceroy. The designation 'Viceroy' had no statutory authority and had never been used by parliament. This title of Viceroy was frequently employed in Warrants of Precedence, in the statutes of Indian Orders, and in public notifications. The

salary of the Viceroy was fixed around rupees 2 lakhs per annum. The Queen appointed Lord Canning to be the first Viceroy.

The Doctrine of Lapse was abolished and the rights of native rulers were recognised. The right to adopt sons as legal heirs was accepted.

### Secretary of State and the India Office

Under the Act of 1858, the Secretary of State (a British minister for Indian Affairs) became the Constitutional advisor of the Crown in all matters relating to India. The Secretary of State was to be assisted by the India Council consisting of 15 members appointed at first for life but later for periods of 10 to 15 years. The establishment of the Secretary of State-in-Council was commonly known as the India office.

### Military reorganization

The British could no longer depend on Indian loyalty, so the number of Indian soldiers was drastically reduced even as the number of European soldiers was increased. The concept of divide and rule was adopted with separate units being created on the basis of caste/community/region. Recruits were to be drawn from the 'martial' races of Punjab, Nepal, and north-western frontier who had proved loyal to the British during the Revolt. Efforts were made to keep the army away from the civilian population.

### Non-discrimination

Equal and impartial protection under law was given to all Indians, besides equal opportunities in government services irrespective of race or creed. It was also promised that old Indian rights, customs and practices would be given due regard while framing and administering the law. The Indian Civil Service Act of 1861 was passed, which was to give an impression that under the Queen all were equal, irrespective of race or creed.



Under the British rule, India developed relations with its neighbour on a new basis. It was the result of two factors. The development of modern means of communication and the political and administrative consolidation of the country impelled the government to reach out to the natural, geographical frontiers of India. This was essential both for defense and for internal cohesion.

The year between 1870 and 1914 witnessed the intense struggle between the European power for colonies and market in **Africa and Asia**. The developed countries of Europe and North America had surplus manufactured goods to sell and surplus capital to invest. The governments of Europe were willing to promote their commercial interest even by use of force against their rivals as well as against the country to be commercially penetrated.

The desire to defend the British Empire in India, to promote their economic interests and to keep other European powers at arm's length from India often led the British India government to commit aggression on Indian neighbours. In other words the desire of the British imperialists to consolidate their administrative and political power in the region led them into conflict with countries neighbouring India.

## ANGLO-BURMESE RELATIONS

Through three successive wars, the independent kingdom of Burma was conquered by the British during the 19th century. The conflict was initiated by border clashes. The British merchants had their eyes on vast forest resources of Burma and were keen to **promote the export of their manufacturers** among Burmese people. The British authorities also wanted to **check the spread of French commercial and political influence** in Burma and the rest of South-East Asia.

### Points of contentions between Burma and British

- Burma wanted to expand westwards.
- The British were greedy for the forest produce of Burma and the market of Burma for its products.

- The British wanted to check and stop French influence in South-East Asia and Burma.

## FIRST BURMA WAR (1824-26)

### Background

Burma was united by king **Alaungpaya** in 1752-60. His successor Bodawpaya conquered Arakan and Manipur in 1785 and 1813 bringing Burma's border up to British India. Burmese westward expansion was a threat to **Assam and the Brahmaputra Valley**. This **led to continuous friction along the ill-defined border between Bengal and Burma**. Finally in 1822, Burma **captured Assam**.

**Chittagong districts** also became the **source of conflict** between the two countries. The Arakan's fugitives used to take shelter in Chittagong districts. The Burmese forces chasing these fugitives often crossed into Indian Territory. Clashes on Chittagong-Arakan frontier came to head over **the possession of Shahpuri Island** in 1823 which was first occupied by Burma and then by the British.

The proposal for neutralization of the island by Burma was rejected by the British. Tension began to rise. Burmese occupation of **Manipur and Assam** was another source of conflict between British and Burma. **The British as a result** started establishing their influence over the border **States of Chachar and Jaintia**. The Burmese were angered and marched their troops in Chachar. A clash between Burma and the British ensued.

### Course and result of the war

The war was officially declared on 24 February 1824. After an initial set-back, the British forces drove the Burmese out from **Assam, Cachar, Manipur and Arakan**. The **British expeditionary forces by sea occupied Rangoon in May 1824** and reached within 45 miles of the capital at Ava. However, Burmese resistance was tough and determined. Especially **effective was guerrilla warfare in the jungles**. **Thus the British and Burmese made peace with the Treaty of Yandabo (February 1826)**.



## Treaty of Yandabo (1826)

The treaty provided for:

- Burma to pay **1 crore rupees as war compensation** to the British East India Company.
- Burma has to cede its coastal province of **Arakan and Tenasserim**.
- Burma has to abandon its claims to **Assam, Cachar and Jaintia**.
- Burma has to recognise **Manipur** as an independent state.
- Burma has to negotiate a **commercial treaty with the company**.
- Burma and Britain had to **exchange diplomats and a British Resident would be at Ava**. Also Burmese envoy would be at Calcutta.

By this treaty, the British deprived Burma of most of its coastline and acquired a firm base in Burma for future expansions.

## SECOND ANGLO-BURMA WAR (1852)

### Background

The second Anglo-Burma war was the result of the commercial **greed of the British**. The British merchants were keen to get hold of timber resources of upper Burma. The large population of Burma also appeared to the British a large market for the sale of British cotton goods and other manufactures. The British, already in occupation of Burma's two coastal provinces, now wanted to establish commercial relations with the rest of Burma, but the Burmese Government would not permit further foreign commercial penetration. British merchants now began to complain of "lack of facilities for trade" and of "oppressive treatment" by the Burmese authorities at Rangoon.

At this time **Lord Dalhousie became the governor general of India**. He was determined to heighten the British imperial prestige and push British interest in Burma. As an excuse for armed intervention, **Dalhousie** took up the petty complaint

of two British sea-captains that the Governor of Rangoon had extorted nearly 1,000 rupees from them. He sent an envoy to Rangoon accompanied by several ships of war to demand compensation for the British Merchants. The envoy demanded the removal of the governor of Rangoon. The Burmese government decided to accept the British resident at Rangoon. After some time, **British Expedition was dispatched to Burma in 1852**. This time the **war was much shorter than in 1825-26** and the British victory was more decisive.

### Cause and result of War

**Rangoon** was captured by the British. Also, other important towns like **Basscin, Pegu, Prome** fell to the British. The **Burmese King Mindon** was hardly in position to fight. Consequently, there was no official negotiations for peace and war ended without a treaty. **Pegu was the only remaining coastal province** of Burma that was annexed by the British in second war. However, an **intense Guerilla Resistance** was put up by Burmese people in that area. Britain had a hard time suppressing these resistance to keep control over the region. The war **brought the Burma's entire coastline and its sea trade under British control**.

## THIRD ANGLO-BURMESE WAR (1885)

### Background

The relation between Burma and Britain remained peaceful for several years after the annexation of Pegu. The British continued their efforts to open up upper Burma. In particular the **British merchants were attracted to the possibility to trade with China through Burma**. Burma was persuaded in **1862 to sign a commercial treaty** by which British merchants were permitted to settle in any parts of Burma and **take their vessels up the Irrawaddy River to China**. However **the Burmese King Mindon retained royal trade monopolies** on articles such as cotton, ivory and wheat. The King **was finally persuaded to end the trade monopolies in 1882**. The British government humiliated Burma's king in 1871 by announcing that relations with him would be conducted through the viceroy of India.



## Cause and result of the War



Burmese King Mindon was **succeeded by King Thibaw**. The British interfered in the internal matters of Burma under the grab of preventing the alleged cruelties of King Thibaw. The British claimed that they wanted to protect the citizens of upper Burma from their own king. Thibaw had been negotiating commercial treaties with the rival powers of British i.e. **France, Germany and Italy**. This was not liked by the British. The French also planned to lay a rail link from Mandalay to the French territory at a time when the British were in conflict

with the French in Niger, Egypt and Madagascar. The French **had also seized Annam (Central Vietnam) in 1883**, laying the groundwork for their Indo-China colony. They were actively pursuing North Vietnam, which they conquered between 1885 and 1889, as well as Thailand and Burma in the west. The British chambers of commerce and British merchants in Rangoon pressed the willing British government to annex upper Burma immediately. The Burmese government accused **the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation** of bribing local officials. Huge fine was imposed on a British timber company by Thibaw. On November 13, 1885, a British invasion was launched.

On November 28, 1885, **King Thibaw surrendered**, and his kingdom was quickly annexed by the Indian Empire under Dufferin. In later years, there was a nationalist movement in Burma during **the First World War**. The **Burmese joined hands with the Indian National Congress**. To weaken their alliance, the **British separated Burma from India in 1935**. Independence movement during the **Second World War intensified** and under the **leadership of U Aung San**, the Burmese people got their **independence in 1948**.

## ANGLO-NEPALESE RELATIONSHIP

### Background

The British desire to extend their Indian Empire to its natural geographical frontier brought them into conflict with the **northern kingdom of Nepal**. The Nepal valley had been conquered in 1768 by the Gurkhas (**western Himalayan Tribe**). **From the Nepal Terai**, Gurkhas now began to push southward. In the meanwhile, **the British conquered Gorakhpur in 1801**. This brought the two expanding powers (British and Gurkhas) face to face across an ill-defined border between India and Nepal.

Also in 1801, the British sought to obtain a treaty from Nepal (signed in October 1801) in which the Nepalese agreed to allow an English Resident at Kathmandu. The Resident was under order to investigate the economy. But **due to the hostility**



of the Nepalese government the Resident had to **withdraw** to India in March 1803. In the following decade the English and the Nepalese had numerous problems over the possession of border villages between India and Nepal.

In 1814, a border clash between the border police of the two countries (British India and Nepal) led to an open war. The British officials had expected an easy walk-over but the Gurkhas defended themselves with vigour and bravery.

#### Course and Result of the war

In April 1815 British occupied Kumaon, and on 15th May they forced the Gurkha Commander Amar Singh Thapa to surrender. The Government of Nepal was now compelled to sue for peace. But the negotiations for peace soon broke down. The Government of Nepal would not accept the British demand for the **stationing of a Resident at Kathmandu**. Fighting resumed early in 1816.

The war ended in the **Treaty of Sagauli**, 1816. Nepal accepted a British Resident. It ceded the **districts of Garhwal and Kumaon** and abandoned its claims to the Terai areas. Nepal also withdrew from Sikkim. The agreement held many advantages for the British.

#### Treaty of Sagauli (1816)

- Nepal accepted a British Resident in its country.
- Nepal ceded districts of **Garhwal and Kumaon** and abandoned its claims to **Terai**.
- Nepal accepted to withdraw from Sikkim

#### Advantage of Treaty for the British

- The British Empire **reached the Himalayas**.
- Facilities to trade with central Asia.
- Acquired sites such as **Shimla, Massourie, Nainital**.
- Gorkhas joined the British India army in large numbers.

## ANGLO-BHUTANESE RELATIONS

### Background

**Warren Hastings** established friendly relations with Bhutan after 1774 when Bhutan permitted Bengal to trade with Tibet through its territory. Relations became unsatisfactory after 1815. The British began to cast their eyes at the base of Bhutan hills containing many **duars or passes**. This area would give Britishers a well-defined border and tea lands for British Planters.

**Ashley Eden** went to Bhutan in 1863, as a British envoy. He mentioned the advantage of occupying the duars. In 1841, **Lord Auckland annexed Assam duars**. It brought the British into close contacts with the mountain state of Bhutan. The relation strained between Bhutan and British. The relations were further strained by the intermittent raids made by Bhutiyas on the Bengal side of the border. In 1865, a **brief war broke out between the two**.

### Result

The war was settled by a treaty signed in 1865. **Bhutan ceded all the Bengal and Assam duars** in return for an annual payment of Rs 50, 000. The government of India was to control Bhutan's defence and foreign relations though it promised not to interfere in Bhutan's internal affairs.

The **Bhutan war** is also known as **Duar War** and this ended in the defeat of the Bhutanese army. The peace was brought by "**Treaty of Sinchula**". This treaty was signed in November 1865. Bhutan ceded all the **Bengal and Assam Duars**. These Duars later became the fields of rich **Tea Plantations of Assam**.



## ANGLO-AFGHAN RELATIONS

### Background

The British Indian Government fought two wars with Afghanistan before its relations with the government of Afghanistan were stabilized. Afghanistan was placed in a **crucial position geographically from the British point of view**. It could serve as an advanced post outside India's frontiers for checking Russia's potential military threat as well as for promoting British commercial interests in Central Asia. It could become a convenient buffer between the two hostile powers (Russia and Britain)

The British policy towards Afghanistan entered an active phase in 1835 when the Whigs came to power in Britain and Lord Palmerston became the Foreign Secretary. Dost Muhammed was the ruler of Afghanistan at this time. Afghan politics had been unsettled since the early years of the 19th century.

Dost Muhammed had brought about partial stability but was constantly threatened by internal and external enemies. In the North he faced internal revolts and the **potential Russian danger**; in the South one of his brothers challenged his power at Kandahar; in the **East Maharaja Ranjit Singh** had occupied Peshawar and beyond Ranjit Singh, lay the English. **Dost Muhammad** was therefore in dire need of powerful friends. He desired some sort of an alliance with the British Government of India.

The British on the other hand wanted to **weaken and end Russian influence in Afghanistan** but they did not want a strong Afghanistan. They wanted to keep her a weak and divided country which they could easily control. This **was so because the British aim was not merely to guard India against Russia but also to penetrate Afghanistan and Central Asia**. **Lord Auckland**, the Indian Governor-General, offered Dost Muhammed an alliance based on the subsidiary system. Dost Muhammed, on the other



hand, wanted genuine sympathy and support of the English. He **wanted to be an ally of the British Indian Government on the basis of complete equality** and not as a subsidiary 'allies'. Having tried his best to acquire British friendship and failed, Dost Muhammad **reluctantly turned towards Russia**.

### **FIRST ANGLO-AFGHAN WAR (1839-1842)**

After Dost Muhammad turned toward Russia, **Auckland decided to replace Dost Muhammed with a British friendly ruler (Shah Shuja)**. Shah Shuja had been deposed from the Afghan throne in 1809 and had been living **since then at Ludhiana** as a **British pensioner**. The British decided to put him back on the Afghan throne.

A treaty was signed between the British **Indian Government, Maharaja Ranjit Singh (Punjab Government) and Shah Shuja at Lahore on 26 June 1838**. According to which the British and Maharaja Ranjit Singh promised to help Shah Shuja capture power in Afghanistan and, in return Shah Shuja promised not to enter into negotiations with any foreign state without the consent of the British and the Punjab Governments.

#### **Treaty of Lahore (1838)**

Shah Shuja to be **enthroned with the armed assistance of the Sikhs**, with the Company remaining in the background, 'jingling the money-bag';.

Shah Shuja to **conduct foreign affairs with the advice of the Sikhs and the British**;

Shah Shuja **gave up his sovereign rights over Sindh's Amirs** in exchange for a large sum of money.

Shah Shuja **recognized Sikh ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh's claims to Afghan territories on the Indus River's right bank**.

Thus after the treaty, **the British Government (without any reason or excuse) decided to interfere** in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and to commit aggression on Afghanistan. **The three allies**

**launched an attack on Afghanistan in February 1839**. Kabul fell to the English on 7 August 1839, and **Shah Shuja was immediately placed on the throne**.

But Shah Shuja was detested and despised by the people of Afghanistan, especially as he had come back with the help of foreign powers. Gradually, the patriotic Afghans began to rise up in anger and Dost Muhammed and his supporters began to harass the British army of occupation. **Dost Muhammed was captured in November 1840 and sent to India as a prisoner**. Then suddenly, **on 2 November 1841, an uprising broke out at Kabul and the sturdy Afghans** fell upon the British forces. **On 11 December 1841, the British were compelled to sign a treaty with the Afghan chiefs by which they agreed to evacuate Afghanistan and to restore Dost Muhammed**.

As the British forces withdrew they were attacked by Afghans all along the way. Thus, the **entire Afghan adventure** of the British ended in total failure. It had proved to be one of the greatest disasters suffered by the British arms in India. The **British Indian Government now organised a new expedition**. Kabul was reoccupied on 16 September 1842. They also arrived at a settlement with Dost Mohammed by which the British evacuated from Kabul and recognized him as the independent ruler of Afghanistan.

#### **Auckland's Policy toward Afghanistan**

He advocated a forward policy. This meant that the **Company government in India had to take action to protect British India's border from a possible Russian attack**. This objective was to be achieved either through treaties with the neighbouring countries or by annexing them completely. **Dost Mohammed**, wanted British friendship but made it **conditional on the British helping him to recover Peshawar from the Sikhs**. This condition was rejected by British government in India. **Dost Mohammed now turned to Russia and Persia for help**. This prompted the British government to go ahead with the forward policy, and **Tripartite Treaty (1838)** was entered into by the **British, Sikhs and Shah Shuja**.



## SECOND ANGLO-AFGHAN WAR (1870-80)

From 1870 onwards, there was a resurgence of imperialism all over the world. The Anglo-Russian rivalry was also intensified. The British statesmen once again thought of bringing Afghanistan under direct political control so that it could serve as a base for British expansion in Central Asia. To force British terms on Sher Ali the Afghan ruler, a new attack on Afghanistan was launched in 1878. This is known as the Second Afghan War.

### Course of War

Lord Lytton offered Sher Ali a favourable treaty, but the Amir preferred friendship with both his powerful neighbours, Russia and British India, while keeping both at arm's length. Sher Ali later refused to keep a British envoy in Kabul despite having previously granted a similar concession to the Russians. When the Russians withdrew their envoy from Kabul, Lytton decided to invade Afghanistan. In the face of the British invasion, Sher Ali fled, and the Treaty of Gandamak (May 1879) was signed with Yakub Khan, Sher Ali's eldest son.

The Treaty of Gandamak provided that:

- The Amir would conduct his foreign policy with the advice of the Government of India;
- That a permanent British resident would be stationed in Kabul;
- The Government of India would provide Amir with all support against foreign aggression, as well as an annual subsidy.

But, under popular pressure, Yakub was forced to abdicate, and the British were forced to retake Kabul and Kandahar. Abdur Rehman was appointed as the new Amir. Lytton devised a plan to dismember Afghanistan but was unable to carry it out. Lord Ripon abandoned this plan in favour of maintaining Afghanistan as a buffer state.

After World War I and the Russian Revolution (1917), Afghans demanded complete independence. Habibullah (who succeeded Abdur Rahman in 1901) was assassinated in 1919, and Amamullah, the new ruler, declared open war on the British. When Afghanistan regained its independence in foreign affairs in 1921, peace was declared.



## ANGLO-TIBETAN RELATIONSHIP

### Background

The chief political authority in Tibet was exercised by the Dalai Lama, who claimed to be the living incarnation of the power of the Buddha. The lamas **wanted to isolate Tibet** from the rest of the world. However, since the beginning of the 17th century, **Tibet had recognised the nominal suzerainty of the Chinese Empire**. The British efforts to establish friendly and commercial relations with Tibet had not yielded any result in the past and a deadlock had been reached by the time of Curzon's arrival in India.

**Both Britain and Russia were keen to promote relations with Tibet**. The British policy towards Tibet was governed by both economic and political considerations. Economically, the British wanted to develop Indo-Tibetan trade and to exploit its rich mineral resources. Politically, they wanted to safeguard the northern frontiers of India.

The **British efforts to establish friendly and commercial relations** with Tibet had not yielded any result in the past and a deadlock had been reached by the time of Curzon's arrival in India.

### British Expedition to Tibet (Younghusband Expedition)

- The **Great Game** was going on between Britain and Russia. Out of fear of growing Russian influence and **reports of Russian arms coming into Tibet**, Lord Curzon felt **threatened** for the interests of the British Empire.
- Lord Curzon sent a small **Gorkha** contingent under **Colonel Younghusband** on a mission to force the Tibetan to come to an agreement with Britain.
- The Tibetan refused to fight the army and offered non-violent resistance.
- Colonel Younghusband **forced his way into Lhasa (Capital of Tibet)** in 1904. **The Dalai Lama fled**.

### Result

**Treaty of Lhasa (1904)**: Colonel Younghusband dictated the terms of the treaty which was non-

negotiable on the part of Tibetans. The treaty provided that:

- War indemnity (cost of expedition) to be paid to the British of rupees seventy five lakhs at the rate of one lakh per year.
- As security for the payment of indemnities, the British were to occupy Chumbi Valley (territory between Sikkim and Bhutan) for seventy five years.
- Tibet would accept the British version of the frontier of Sikkim.
- Trading posts will be set up at Yatung, Gyantse and Gartok.
- Tibet would not give any concession to set up railways, roads or telegraph in the province to any other European power.
- Britain will dictate the terms of Tibet's foreign policy.

Later due to **insistence from the Secretary of State** (in Britain), the treaty was **revised and indemnity amount was reduced to twenty five lakhs** from seventy five lakhs. In addition to it, **Chumbi Valley** was evacuated by the British, giving its control back to Tibet in 1908.

**There was a convention between Britain and Russia in 1907 (Anglo-Russian Entente)**, which provided that both parties would not negotiate any treaty or agreement with Tibet except through mediation of the Chinese Government.

## BRITISH INDIA AND THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

The North-West Frontier region was **lying between the Indus and Afghanistan**. The **annexation of Sindh and Punjab** brought the British into direct contact with **Baluch and Pathan tribes (Hill Tribes)**, who were mostly independent, but the Amir of Afghanistan claimed nominal suzerainty over them. The northern part of the North-West frontier was inhabited by **the Pathans and it was administered by the Punjab** province. While the **Southern part occupied by the Baluchis known as the Sindh frontier** was then under Bombay. The hill



tribes, however, were practically free, owing only nominal allegiance to the Amir of Kabul.

The hill tribes inhabited dry and difficult terrain, lived on meager resources but had military skill. **The Hill tribes frequently indulged in mass raids and plundering of the British Indian border areas.** These turbulent tribes **created a turmoil that seemed to defy all chances of a stable and peaceful frontier which was essential for the defence of India.**

During 1891-92 the British occupation of **Hunza, Nagar in Gilgit valley**, which was passing commanding communications with Chitral, alarmed **Abdur Rahman (Amir of Afghanistan).**

A **compromise was reached by drawing the Durand Line** between Afghan and British territories. Amir was given some districts and his stipend was increased. However, the **Durand Agreement (1893) failed** to keep the peace, and tribal uprisings erupted soon after. To counter these, a **permanent British garrison was established in Chitral, and troops were stationed to guard the Malakand Pass,** but tribal uprisings continued until 1898.

**Lord Curzon**, who served as viceroy from 1899 to 1905, pursued a **policy of withdrawal and concentration.** British troops withdrew from advanced positions, which were replaced by **tribal levies** (to officially demand and collect money) trained and commanded by British officers. He also urged the tribals to maintain the peace.

### Measures by Lord Curzon

He established the **North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) directly under the control of the Government of India** (earlier, it was under control of the lieutenant-governor of Punjab). Curzon's policies **resulted in a peaceful north-western border.** Following that, the peaceful conditions were maintained with the exception of a few tribal uprisings. It was announced in January **1932 that the NWFP would be established as a governor's province.** Pakistan has controlled the province since 1947.

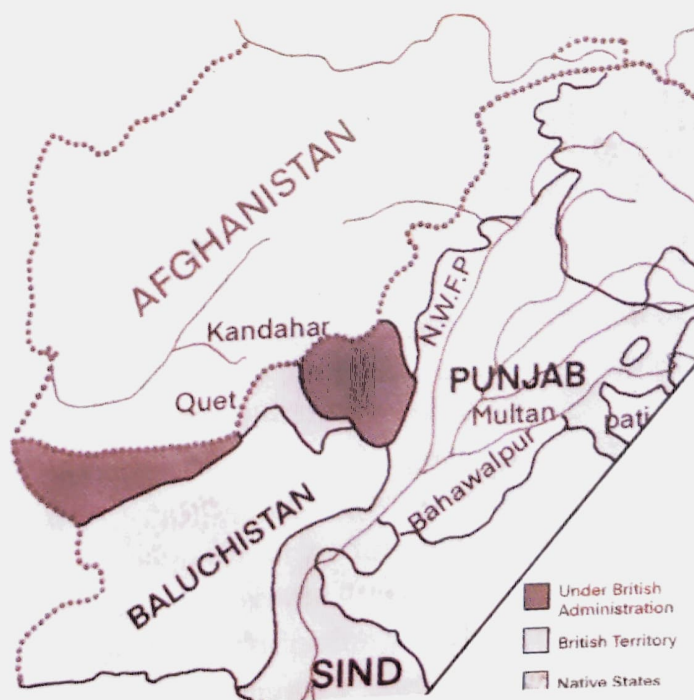
### Policy of Non-Interference

After settlement between Dost Muhammad and British, a **new period of Anglo-Afghan friendship was inaugurated in 1855** with the signing of a treaty of friendship between Dost Muhammed and the Government of India. The **two governments promised to maintain friendly and peaceful relations**, to respect each other's territories and to abstain from interfering in each other's internal affairs.

Dost Muhammed also agreed that he would be "the friend of the friends of the East India Company and the enemy of its enemies. He remained loyal to this treaty during the Revolt of 1857 and refused to give help to the rebels. **After 1864 this policy of non-interference** was vigorously pursued by Lord Lawrence and his two successors.

**Lawrence's policy was predicated on two conditions:**

That the border peace was not disturbed, and That no candidate in a civil war sought foreign assistance. Lawrence attempted to cultivate friendship with **Sher Ali** as he established himself on the throne





A number of popular mobilizations, revolts, and mutinies against foreign rule and its attendant evils occurred in the century after 1757. Local disturbances caused due to loss of independence, foreign intrusion into local autonomy, introduction of administrative innovations, excessive land revenue demands, and economic dislocation felt in different regions of India at different times.

### FACTORS BEHIND UPRISINGS

- The British wanted to control Indian territories and in order to do this they introduced numerous reforms that affected Indian society, government, and economy. The positive reforms were welcomed by the Indians but the oppressive measures forced natives to begin revolts and uprisings.
- The changes introduced in the economy, administration and land revenue system disrupted the agrarian society and caused widespread suffering among the natives.
- The scholarly and priestly classes were involved in inciting anti-foreign sentiment and rebellion.
- Artisans became impoverished as a result of the collapse of the Indian handicraft industries due to the implementation of free trade in India and the imposition of discriminatory tariffs on Indian goods in Britain.
- Due to the destruction of indigenous industry, workers were forced to migrate to agriculture, which increased the pressure on land and agriculture.

### CIVIL REBELLIONS

Civil rebellions are generally led by non-military populations, such as deposed native rulers and their descendants, former zamindars and landlords, and religious leaders, among others. The majority of support for these rebellions came from oppressed peasants, unemployed artisans, and demobilised soldiers, although these revolts were led by formerly powerful classes.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF CIVIL UPRISINGS

- The civil uprisings occurred at different times and locations but represented common conditions.
- The semi-feudal leaders of civil uprisings had a traditional outlook and were backward-looking. Their main goal was to bring back previous forms of social order and rule.
- These uprisings had regional causes and grievances, and their effects were also regional.

### IMPORTANT CIVIL UPRISINGS

#### Sanyasi Revolt

**Timeline:** 1763-1800

**Regions involved:** Eastern India

**Prominent Leaders:** Manju Shah, Musa Shah, Bhawani Pathak and Debi Chaudhurani.

The disastrous famine of 1770 and the harsh economic order of the British compelled a group of sanyasis in Eastern India to fight the British rule. These groups of sanyasis were originally peasants (some of them were evicted from their land). These sanyasis were joined by a large number of **dispossessed small zamindars (deprived of their land), disbanded soldiers and rural poor**. Sanyasis raided Company factories and the treasuries, and fought the Company's forces. It was only after a prolonged action that **Warren Hastings** could subdue the **sanyasis**.

**Causes of the Revolt:** Famine of 1770, harsh economic order of the British, restrictions imposed on the pilgrims visiting the holy places.

**Result:** After a prolonged action, **Warren Hastings** curtailed the sanyasi revolt.

**Significance:** Equal participation of Hindus and Muslims was observed in the revolt.

- Women's participation was also observed.
- **Debi Chaudhurani's** participation recognises the women's role in early resistance against the British.



- **Anandamath**, a semi-historical novel by **Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay**, is based on the Sanyasi Revolt. India's national song—'Vande Mataram' is adopted from this novel.
- **Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay** also wrote a novel, **Devi Chaudhurani**, as he saw the importance of women taking up the struggle against an alien rule that posed a threat to traditional Indian values.

## Revolt in Midnapore and Dhalbhum

**Timeline: 1766-74**

**Regions Involved: Midnapore and Dhalbhum**

**Prominent Leaders: Damodar Singh and Jagannath Dhal**

The English took hold of Midnapore of **Bengal** in 1760. At that time, there were about 3,000 zamindars and talukdars having cordial relations with their ryots. This harmonious scenario changed after the introduction of the **Permanent Settlement System by the British in 1772**. According to the British **Governor Vansittart**, the zamindars of Midnapore sided with the ryots in case of conflict between the ryots and the English revenue collecting officials.

The zamindars of Dhalbhum, Manbhum, Raipur, Panchet, Jhatibuni, Karnagarh, and Bagri —were ultimately dispossessed of their zamindari by the 1800s.

## Revolt of Moamarias

**Timeline: 1769-99**

**Regions Involved: Assam, Bhatiapar, Rangpur (now in Bangladesh) and Jorhat**

It was a conflict in Assam between **the Moamarias and the Ahom kings**. The Moamarias were low-caste peasants who followed the teachings of **Aniruddhadeva (1553-1624)**. The Moamarias revolt weakened the Ahoms. It also paved the way for

others to attack the region. For instance, in 1792, the **King of Darrang** (Krishnanarayan), assisted by **his band of burkandazes** (the demobilised soldiers of the Muslim armies and zamindars) revolted. To crush these revolts, the Ahom ruler had to request for British help. The Moamarias **made Bhatiapar their headquarters**. Rangpur (now in Bangladesh) and Jorhat were the most affected regions.

**Causes of the Revolt:** When the Moamoria Guru and disciples were humiliated and punished by royal officers in 1769 CE, the uprising started.

**Result:** The Moamarias made **Bhatiapar their headquarters**. Ahom kingdom fell to Burmese invasion and finally came under British rule.

## Ahom Dynasty (1228–1826)

The Ahom dynasty (1228–1826) controlled the Ahom kingdom in present-day Assam, India. **Sukaphaa or Tsue-Ka-Pha**, a Shan prince from Mong Mao founded the dynasty. The rulers of this dynasty were known as **Asam Raja** in foreign medieval chronicles, while their subjects referred to them as **Chaopha or Swargadeo**.

With the beginning of the **Moamoria uprising**, the kingdom became weaker, and Assam was often invaded by Burmese armies. With the **Burmese invasion of Assam in 1826** and the subsequent absorption by the British East India Company with the Treaty of Yandabo, **this dynasty's reign came to an end**.

## Civil Uprisings in Gorakhpur, Basti and Bahraich

**Timeline: 1781**

**Regions Involved: Gorakhpur, Basti and Bahraich**

**Warren Hastings**, to meet the war expenses against the **Marathas and Mysore**, made a plan to earn money by involving English officers as **izaradars** (revenue farmers) in Awadh. He involved **Major Alexander Hannay**, who was well acquainted with the region, as an izaradar in 1778. **Hannay** secured the **izara of Gorakhpur and Bahraich** to the



amount of 22 lakh rupees for one year. In fact, it was a secret experiment by the Company to see for itself just how much surplus money was accessible in practice.

The zamindars and farmers revolted against the excessive demand of revenue. All of **Hannay's** subordinates were either **slain or besieged** by zamindari guerrilla troops.

#### Causes of the Revolt

- A scheme devised by Warren Hastings to employ English officers as izaradars (revenue farmers) in Awadh to meet the war expenses against the Marathas and Mysore.
- Company was also conducting a secret experiment to see how much extra money was available in practice.
- Hannay's oppression and excessive demand for revenue made the region panic-stricken.

**Result:** In the end, the rebellion was suppressed. **Hannay was dismissed** and **his izara was forcibly removed**.

#### Revolt of Raja of Vizianagaram

**Timeline: 1794**

**Region Involved:** Vizianagaram, Padmanadham (in modern Visakhapatnam district)

**Prominent Leaders:** Vizayaramaraju

In 1758, a treaty was made between the **English** and **Ananda Gajapatiraju**, the ruler of Vizianagaram, to jointly remove the French from the Northern Circars. However, English refused to honour the terms of the treaty. **Ananda Gajapatiraju** died before he could seriously tackle the English. **The East India Company** went on to demand a **tribute of three lakh rupees** from **Vizayaramaraju** (the next **Raja of Vizianagaram**) and asked him to disband his troops. This angered the **raja** as there were no dues to be paid to the Company. The **raja supported by his subjects rose up in revolt**.

#### Causes of the Revolt

- Refusal of honouring the treaty by the English
- Demand of Tribute from Vizayaramaraju by East India Company

#### Result

- The English captured the raja (Vizayaramaraju) in 1793 and ordered him to go into exile with a pension but the raja refused. The raja died in a battle at **Padmanabham** (in modern Visakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh) in 1794. Vizianagaram came under the Company's rule.

#### Revolt of Dhundia in Bednur (1799-1800)

**Timeline: 1799-1800**

**Region Involved:** Mysore

**Prominent Leaders:** Dhundia Wagh

After the conquest of Mysore in 1799 (The Fourth-Anglo Mysore War), the English were forced to contend with numerous indigenous leaders. Dhundia Wagh, a Maratha adventurer, who was earlier captured by Tipu Sultan due to his mis-adventures, got released with the fall of Seringapatam.

After the release, Dhundia assembled a force of anti-British elements. He carved out a small territory for himself. British reacted swiftly and defeated him in August 1799. He was compelled to seek refuge in the Maratha region.

#### Causes of the Revolt

- **Dhundia Wagh** was an ambitious leader and wanted to control his own territory.
- He incited the defeated princes in the Maratha region to fight against the English and assumed leadership.

#### Result

- He was killed in September 1800 while fighting against the British forces led by Wellesley. Despite his failure, Dhundia became a revered leader of the masses.



## Resistance of Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja

**Timeline:** 1797; 1800-05

**Region Involved:** Kottayam

**Prominent Leaders:** Pazhassi Raja

Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja, popularly known as **Kerala Simham (Lion of Kerala)** or 'Pyche raja', was the de facto head of **Kottayam (Cotiate)** in Malabar region. He resisted Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. He fought against the British between 1793 and 1805. The English appointed **Vira Varma** (the uncle of Pazhassi Raja) as the Raja of Kottayam. The new raja, to meet the revenue target fixed by the Company, **levied exorbitant rates of tax on the peasant**. This led to a **mass resistance by the peasants** under the **leadership of Pazhassi Raja in 1793**. Pazhassi Raja fought bravely using guerrilla warfare, and in 1797 a peace treaty was made. But a conflict over a dispute on Wayanad in 1800 started an insurgent warfare. **Pazhassi Raja organised a large force of Nairs** which was **supplemented by Mappilas and Pathans** (Pathans were demobilised soldiers of Tipu who had become unemployed after Tipu's death).

### Causes of the Revolt

- Exorbitant rates of tax on the peasants levied by **Vira Varma**.
- A conflict over a dispute on Wayanad also started an insurgent warfare in 1800.

**Result:** In November 1805, Pazhassi Raja died in a gun-fight at Mavila Todu near present day Kerala-Karnataka border.

### Civil Rebellion in Awadh

**Timeline:** 1799

**Region Involved:** Awadh

**Prominent Leaders:** Wazir Ali Khan

In 1797, **Wazir Ali Khan** (the fourth Nawab of Awadh) with the help of the British, ascended the throne. He was replaced by his uncle, Saadat Ali Khan II. Wazir Ali Khan was granted a pension

in Benares. He killed a British resident, **Geogre Frederik Cherry** in 1799. His guards killed two other Europeans and even attacked the Magistrate of Benares. The **whole incident** became famous as the **Massacre of Benares**.

Wazir Ali was able to assemble an army of several thousand men which **was defeated by General Erskine**. Wazir Ali **fled to Butwal** and was granted **asylum by the ruler of Jaipur**. Arthur Wellesley requested the Raja of Jaipur to extradite Wazir Ali.

**Causes of the Revolt:** Replacement of Wazir Ali Khan (the fourth Nawab of Awadh) and granting him a pension in Benares.

**Result:** Wazir Ali was extradited by the Raja of Jaipur and was placed in confinement at Fort William, Calcutta.

### Uprisings in Ganjam and Gumsur

**Timeline:** 1800, 1835-37

**Regions Involved:** Ganjam and Gumsur; Kolaida

**Prominent Leaders:** Strikara Bhanj, Dhananjaya Bhanj

In the Northern Circars, Ganjam and its adjoining regions rose in revolt against British rule. **Strikara Bhanj**, a zamindar of Gumsur in Ganjam district, refused to pay revenues in 1797. In 1800, he openly rebelled and defied the public authorities. Strikara was joined by **Jlani Deo of Vizianagar** (Poddakimedi) and **Jagannath Deo of Pratapgiri** (Chinakimedi). In 1804 **Jagannath Deo was captured** and sent to Masulipatnam. But the English had to assign certain districts to Strikara Bhanj. In 1807-08, **Dhananjaya Bhanj, son of Strikara**, forced his father to leave the estate. Dhananjaya rebelled against the English but was forced to surrender in June 1815.

Strikara was reappointed as the zamindar in a compromise with the government. He managed the estate between 1819 and 1830 but failed to liquidate the arrears. He retired in favour of his son, Dhananjay.



Dhananjay again was unable to pay the arrears to the British. He rose in rebellion for the **second time** when the **British forces occupied Gumsur and Kolaida in November 1835**.

**Causes of the Revolt:** Revenue demand made by the British to Strikara Bhanj.

**Result:** Russell was appointed by the British Government with full discretionary powers to deal with the uprising. The zamindari of Gumsur was forfeited.

## Uprisings in Palamau

**Timeline: 1800-02**

**Regions Involved:** Palamau, Sarguja

**Prominent Leaders:** Bhukhan Singh

The political situation of Palamau was complicated due to crises of agrarian landlordism and feudal system. In 1800, **Bhukhan Singh**, a Chero chief, rose in rebellion.

**Causes of the Revolt:** Crises of agrarian landlordism and feudal system

**Result:** R Colonel Jones stayed for two years in Palamau and Sarguja to suppress the rebellion. **Bhukhan Singh** died and the uprising calmed down.

## Poligars' Revolt

**Timeline: 1795-1805**

**Regions Involved:** Tinneveli, Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga, Sivagiri, Madurai, North Arcot, Chittur, Chandragiri, Charagallu

**Prominent Leaders:** Kattabomman Nayakan, Subramania Pillai, Oomathurai

The Poligars were **local warlords of south India**. They gave a stiff resistance to the British between 1795 and 1805. The main centres of these strong uprisings were Tinneveli, Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga, Sivagiri, Madurai, and North Arcot.

## First Phase

**Management to the East India Company:** In the first phase, the problem started, when the Nawab of Arcot gave the **management and control of Tinneveli and the Carnatic Provinces to the East India Company in 1781**. The Poligars resented as they considered themselves as independent sovereign authorities within their respective territories. **Kattabomman Nayakan**, the poligar of Panjalankurichi, led the insurrection between 1795 and 1799. In the end, Company forces were finally able to defeat Kattabomman. He was captured and hanged.

## Second Phase

**Taking control of forts and Tuticorin:** It started in February 180, when the poligars imprisoned in the fort of Palamcotta were able to escape. They took control of many forts and even captured Tuticorin. **Oomathurai (brother of Kattabomman)** joined the rebellion of the 'Marudus' led by Marathu Pandian which was suppressed in October 1801. Meanwhile, the nawab surrendered the civil and military administration of all the territories and dependencies of the Carnatic exclusively to the Company in perpetuity.

Between 1803 and 1805, the poligars of North Arcot rose in rebellion, when they were **deprived of their right to collect the kaval fees**. The region was in a lawless condition particularly in the palayams of Chittur and Chandragir.

## Causes of the Revolt

- Submission of management and control of Tinneveli and the Carnatic Provinces to the East India Company in 1781.
- Poligars deprived of their right to collect **Kaval fees**.

## Result

- By February 1805, the rebels were suppressed.
- Several chiefs were ordered to reside in Madras while some others were granted an allowance of 18 per cent upon revenues of their estate



## Significance

- **Mass movement was observed during this Revolt.** The **Poligars revolt** spreaded over a vast area of South India. This indicated that they believed in a mass movement against the alien rule, seeking independence for them.

**Kaval fee or 'watch' fee** was an ancient institution of Tamil Nadu. It was a **hereditary village police office** with specified rights and responsibilities.

## Diwan Velu Thampi's Revolt

**Timeline:** 1808-1809

**Regions Involved:** Travancore, Kundara

**Prominent Leaders:** Velu Thampi

The State of Travancore had agreed to a subsidiary **alliance arrangement under Wellesley in 1805**. In spite of that harsh conditions were imposed by the British on the state of Travancore. The British resident of Travancore also used to meddle in the internal affairs of the state. It caused deep resentment in the region. The ruler of the state **was not able to pay the subsidy** and fell in arrears. **Velu Thampi, Prime Minister** (or Dalawa) of Travancore rebelled against the British.

Velu Thampi addressed a gathering in Kundara openly calling for taking up arms against the British. This was later known as the **Kundara Proclamation**.

### Causes of the Revolt

- Harsh conditions imposed by the British on the state of Travancore
- Interfering of British Resident in the internal matters of the state.

### Result

- Maharaja of Travancore defected to the side of the Company.
- Velu Thampi killed himself to avoid capture.
- The rebellion petered out.

## Disturbances in Bundelkhand

**Timeline:** 1808-12

**Regions Involved:** Bundelkhand; Ajaygarh, Kalanjar

**Prominent Leaders:** Lakshaman Dawa, Darya Singh, Gopal Singh

The **vast province of Bundelkhand** was conquered by the British during the Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803-05). It was put within the Presidency of Bengal. The Bundela chiefs offered resistance to the new government. The first major resistance came from **Lakshaman Dawa**, the killadar (fort commander) of Ajaygarh fort. Lakshman was permitted to retain the fort as a temporary arrangement for two years ending in 1808. He then surrendered in February 1809 and was taken to Calcutta. The next resistance came from killadar of Kalanjar, **Darya Singh**, which was suppressed in January 1812. The other threat came from a famous military adventurer named **Gopal Singh**.

**Cause of the Revolt:** Britishers attached **Bundelkhand** with Bengal Presidency

**Result: To end the resistance**, the British had to adopt a policy of binding down the hereditary chieftains of Bundelkhand by a series of contractual obligations—**Ikarnamahs**

## Parlakimedi Outbreak

**Timeline:** 1813-34

**Region Involved:** Parlakimedi, Odisha

**Prominent Leaders:** Narayan Deo and Gajapathi Deo

Parlakimedi is situated in the western border of Ganjam district (now in Odisha). It witnessed resistance from the zamindars and rajas. When the Company acquired Ganjam, Narayan Deo was the raja of Parlakimedi. Narayan Deo's resistance forced the British to dispatch an army under **Colonel Peach**. Peach defeated Narayan Deo in 1768 and made Gajapathi Deo (son of Narayan) proclaimed



zamindar. But Narayan Deo, supported by his son and brothers, revolted again.

**Cause of the Revolt:** Acquiring of Ganjam district by British

**Result:** To curtail the resistance, the Presidency of Madras appointed **George Russell** as commissioner of the region in 1832. Russell pacified the region by 1834.

### Kutch Or Cutch Rebellion

**Timeline:** 1816-1832

**Region Involved:** Kutch

**Prominent Leaders:** Raja Bharmal II

There was a treaty between the **British and Maharaja Bharamal II** of Kutch in 1816, by which power was vested in the throne. But there was a power struggle between the Maharaja and a group of chieftains. The British also interfered in the internal matters of the Kutch. In 1819, **Raja Bharmal II** raised Arab and African troops against the British to remove them from his territory. The chieftains ranged on his side.

**Cause of the Revolt:** Interference of British in the internal matters of Kutch.

**Result:** Kutch ruler Rao Bharamal II was defeated and company's authorities were compelled to follow a **conciliatory policy**.

### Rising at Bareilly

**Timeline:** 1816

**Region Involved:** Bareilly

**Prominent Leader:** Mufti Muhammad Aiwaz

The immediate cause of upsurge was the imposition of the police tax which aroused the burning indignation of the citizens. The issue became religious when **Mufti Muhammad Aiwaz**, a venerated old man, gave a petition to the magistrate of the town in March 1816. The situation aggravated further when the police, while collecting

tax, injured a woman. The Mufti's supporters and the police got into a brutal brawl as a result of this incident.

Within two days following the incident, armed Muslims from Pilibhit, Shahjahanpur, and Rampur rose up in revolt to defend the faith and the Mufti. The revolt could only be put down with the strong deployment of military troops.

**Cause of the Revolt:** Imposition of the police tax.

**Result:** The rebels were suppressed with heavy deployment of military forces.

### Upsurge in Hathras

**Timeline:** 1817

**Region Involved:** Hathras

**Prominent leader:** Dayaram and Bhagwant Singh

**Dayaram**, a talukdar of numerous villages in Aligarh's district, maintained a stronghold at the Hathras fort. The English had concluded the settlement of Hathras estate with Dayaram as a farmer. But due to progressively increasing high revenues, Dayaram constantly failed to pay arrears and even committed many acts of hostility by giving harbour to government fugitives. In February 1817, the Company attacked Hathras. Dayaram fought bravely for more than 15 days and escaped unharmed.

**Cause of the Revolt:** High revenues were demanded from Dayaram by the British.

**Result:** Dayaram was obliged to come back on condition of submission to the British and settled down with a pension.

### Paika Rebellion

**Timeline:** 1817

**Region Involved:** Odisha

**Prominent Leaders:** Bakshi/Baxi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar



The **Paiks of Odisha** were the traditional landed militia ('foot soldiers' literally) and enjoyed rent free land tenures for their military service and policing functions on a hereditary basis. The English Company's conquest of Odisha in 1803, and the dethronement of the Raja of Khurda had greatly reduced the power and prestige of the Paiks.

**Bakshi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar** had been the military chief of the forces of the Raja of Khurda. In 1814, Jagabandhu's ancestral estate of **Killa Rorang was taken over by the Company**. Also, there was an arrival of Khonds from Gumsur into the Khurda territory in March 1817. With active support of Mukunda Deva, the last Raja of Khurda, and other zamindars of the region, Bakshi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar led a sundry army of Paikas forcing the East India Company forces to retreat for a time. The **rebellion came to be known as the Paika Bidroh (rebellion)**.

**Causes of the Revolt:** Conquest of Odisha in 1803, removal of Raja of Khurda from the throne and weakening of power and prestige of Paikas.

#### Result

- The rebellion was brutally repressed by 1818. **Priests at the Puri temple** who had sheltered Jagabandhu were caught and hanged.
- In 1825 Jagabandhu surrendered under negotiated terms.
- The Paik Rebellion succeeded in getting large remissions of arrear, reductions in assessments, suspension of the sale of the estates of defaulters at discretion.
- **A new settlement on fixed tenures** was introduced in the region.

### Waghera Rising

**Timeline:** 1818-1820

**Region Involved:** Gujarat

The **Wagheras of Okha Mandal** in Baroda region of modern Gujarat resented the impositions of foreign rule from the very beginning. The revenue demands of the **Gaekwad of Baroda** supported by the British Government compelled the Waghera chief to take up arms in 1818.

**Causes of the Revolt:** Resentment against the British rule and revenue demands of the Gaekwad of Baroda.

**Result:** A peace treaty was signed in November 1820.

### Ahom Revolt

**Timeline:** 1828

**Region Involved:** Assam

**Prominent Leaders:** Gomdhar Konwar, Dhanjoy Bongohain, and Jairam Khargharia Phukan

The British had pledged to withdraw from Assam after the **First Burma War (1824-26)**. But, after the war, British attempted to incorporate the Ahoms' territories in the Company's dominion. This sparked off a rebellion in 1828 under the leadership of **Gomdhar Konwar (an Ahom prince)**.

**Cause of the Revolt:** Failure of British to withdraw from Assam after the first Burma War (1824-26).

**Result:** Company handed over Upper Assam to Maharaja Purandar Singh Narendra and part of the kingdom was restored to the Assamese king.

### Surat Salt Agitations

**Timeline:** 1840

**Region Involved:** Surat

In August 1844, the British government started levying Re 1 as excise and import duties on salt in Surat. The tax was earlier 50 paise. This resulted in attacks by the local Surat population on the Europeans.

**Cause of the Revolt:** Increase of salt tax.

**Result:** The government **withdrew the additional salt levy**.

### Kuka Movement

**Region Involved:** Western Punjab

**Prominent Leaders:** Bhagat Jawahar Mal, Baba Ram Singh.



The Kuka Movement was founded in 1840 by **Bhagat Jawahar Mal** (also called Sian Saheb) in western Punjab. Earlier the movement was based on religious purification campaigns. After the British took Punjab, **the movement got transformed from a religious purification campaign to a political campaign.**

**Cause of the Revolt:** Kukas had certain principles and they preached it as well. They were against the political order of the British and wanted to overthrow British Rule to restore sikh sovereignty.

### Result

- As the movement gained in popularity, the British took several steps to crush it in the period between 1863 and 1872. In 1872, Ram Singh was deported to Rangoon.

### Significance

- Its basic tenets were abolition of caste and similar discriminations among Sikhs.

- Discouraging the consumption of meat and alcohol and drugs.
- Permission for intermarriages, widow remarriage, and encouraging women to step out of seclusion.
- The Kukas wanted to remove the British and restore Sikh rule over Punjab.
- The concepts **of swadeshi and non-cooperation** were propagated. Kukas **advocated wearing hand-woven clothes and boycotting English laws and education and products.**

### Kukas

The **Kukas were also referred to as Namdharis**, who were a sect within Sikhism. They started as a group for religious purification **in Sikhism under Ram Singh**. The movement received a political overtone with the established aim of restoring Sikh rule in Punjab and ousting the foreign powers.



## CONCLUDING REMARKS

- The British **succeeded in pacifying** the rebel areas one by one.
- Some violent rebels were killed or hanged publicly. For example, Velu Thampi was publicly hanged even after he was dead.
- The British also gave concessions to rebel zamindars in the form of restoration of their zamindari as long as they agreed to live peacefully under alien authority.
- The historical significance of these civil uprisings lies in the fact that they **established strong and valuable local traditions of resistance** to British rule.
- The **Indian people were to draw inspiration** from these traditions in the later nationalist struggle for freedom.

### Kolhapur and Savantvadi Revolts

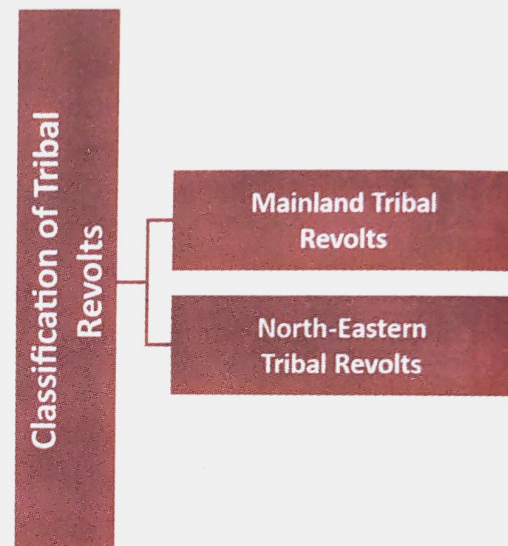
The hardships caused by administrative reorganisation in the Kolhapur state after 1844 caused deep resentment. The Godkaris (the hereditary military class which garrisoned Maratha forts) were disbanded. Faced with the spectre of unemployment the Godkaris rose in revolt and occupied the forts of Samangarh and Bhudargarh. Similarly, the simmering discontent caused a revolt in Savantvadi.

## TRIBAL UPRISING

Tribal Movements in India under British rule were **the most frequent, violent, and militant** of all the movements. Before the colonial rule in India, tribals had been living peacefully in their regions in harmony with nature. When the British came to India, they introduced many changes in their way of life. Many of the tribal groups revolted against this forceful instruction by the British into their life and region. In the 19th and 20th centuries, India had witnessed numerous such rebels and movements.

## CLASSIFICATION OF TRIBAL REVOLTS

**Mainland Tribal Revolts:** The tribes in mainland India make up 89% of the overall tribal population. The mainland tribes or the non-frontier tribes were mostly restricted to Andhra, west-central India, and central India. **Khonds, Savara, Santhal, Munda, Oraon, Koya, Kol, Gond and Bhils** were a few of the tribes that took part in the movements. These tribal uprisings were quite violent and included several significant uprisings.



**North-Eastern Tribal Revolts:** These tribes are the inhabitants of Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura, seven of the frontier states in the northeast.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TRIBAL REVOLTS

There were some common characteristics of the tribal uprisings even though they were separated from one another in time and space.

- **Matter of identity:** Tribal identity or ethnic ties lay behind the solidarity shown by these groups.
- **Class Struggle:** The poor who lived by their manual labour or profession and had a socially/economically supportive role in the village were left alone; the violence was directed towards



the money-lenders and traders who were seen as extensions of the colonial government.

- **Divine figures:** Many uprisings were led by **messiah-like figures** who encouraged their people to revolt and who held out the promise that they could end their suffering brought about by the 'outsiders'.

- **Use of traditional weapons:** The tribal uprisings were doomed from the beginning, given the outdated arms they fought with as against the modern weapons and techniques used by their opponents.

## CATEGORIZATION OF VARIOUS TRIBAL MOVEMENTS BY THEIR REASONS

Kind of Movement	Examples
Movements due to exploitation by outsiders	The Santhals and the Mundas
Movements due to economic deprivation	Gonds in Madhya Pradesh Mahars in Andhra Pradesh
Movements due to separatist tendencies	The Nagas and Mizos
Movements seeking political autonomy and formation of a state	Nagas, Mizos, Jharkhand
Agrarian movements	Santhal Movements
Forest based movements	Muriya and Mariya movements
Socio-religious or socio-cultural movements	The Bhagat movement among Bhils of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, movement among tribals of south Gujarat or Raghunath Murmu's movement among the Santhals

## TRIBAL MOVEMENTS OF MAINLAND

### Chuar Uprising

**Timeline:** 1766 – 1772, 1795 and 1816

**Regions Involved:** Jungle Mahal of Midnapore district, Bankura district (Bengal), Ghatsila

**Prominent Leaders:** Jagannath Singh, Shyam Ganjan of Dhadka, Subla Singh of Kaliapal, Durjan of Raipir, Madhab Singh, Raja Mohan Singh (zamindar of Juriah) and Lachman Singh of Dulma

These tribal people were basically farmers and hunters. Famine, enhanced land revenue demands and economic distress forced the Chuar aboriginal tribesmen of the **Jungle Mahal of Midnapore**

**district** and also of the Bankura district (in Bengal) to take up arms. The uprising lasted from 1766 to 1772 and then, again surfaced between 1795 and 1816. In **1768, Jagannath Singh**, the zamindar of Ghatsila, went up in arms, along with thousands of Chuars. The most significant uprising was under **Durjan** (or Durjol) Singh in 1798, who was the zamindar of Raipur from which he was dispossessed owing to the operations of Bengal Regulations. In May 1798, his followers indulged in violent activities in Raipur to halt the auction of the estate of Raipur.

**Causes of the Movement:** Famine, enhanced land revenue demands and economic distress.

#### Result

- The revolt was brutally suppressed by the British



## Kol Mutiny

**Timeline:** 1831

**Regions Involved:** Chhotanagpur region: Ranchi, Singhbhum, Hazaribagh, Palamau and the western parts of Manbhum.

**Prominent Leaders:** Buddho Bhagat

The Kols are inhabitants of Chhotanagpur. This covered Ranchi, Singhbhum, Hazaribagh, Palamau and the western parts of Manbhum. The trouble started in 1831 with **large-scale transfers of land from Kol headmen to outsiders** like Hindu, Sikh and Muslim farmers and money-lenders who were oppressive and demanded heavy taxes. The Kols resented this and in 1831, under the leadership of Buddho Bhagat, the Kol rebels killed or burnt about a thousand outsiders.

**Causes of the Movement:** Large-scale transfers of land from Kol headmen to outsiders like Hindu, Sikh and Muslim farmer and Moneylenders, Demand of heavy taxes from moneylenders, The British judicial and revenue policies badly affected the traditional social conditions of the Kols.

### Result

- Large-scale military operations were carried to restore the peace.

## Pahariyas' Rebellion

**Timeline:** 1778

**Regions Involved:** Rajmahal Hills

**Prominent Leader:** Raja Jagganath

The Paharias were the hill people that resided around the Rajmahal hills. They considered the entire Raj Mahal area as their land. They resisted the intrusion of outsiders. Their chiefs maintained the unity of the group, settled disputes, and led the tribes in battles with other tribes and mainland people. With their base in the hills, the Paharias **regularly raided the plains where, settled agriculturists lived**. These raids also served

as a means of demonstrating dominance over the established settlements. The zamindars on the plains had to often **purchase peace** by **paying a regular tribute to the hill chiefs**.

However, these peace agreements dissolved in the late eighteenth century as established agriculture grew in eastern India, **with the British pushing forest removal**. The expansion of established agriculture reduced the area of forest and pastures, causing friction between hill inhabitants and settled cultivators.

Further, in the 1770s the British embarked on a brutal policy of extermination, hunting the Paharias down and killing them. Then, **by the 1780s, Augustus Cleveland**, the Collector of Bhagalpur, proposed a policy of pacification. In this policy, Paharia chiefs were given an annual allowance and made responsible for the proper conduct of their men. This policy was not accepted by all Pahariyas. Thus, the British expansion on their territory **led to an uprising** by the martial Pahariyas of the **RajMahal Hills** in 1778.

**Cause of the Movement:** Brutal policy of extermination and hunting the Paharias by the British, extension of settled agriculture by the British in Rajmahal hill area, forest clearance by the British, turning uncultivated fields into rice fields by zamindars and jotedars.

### Result

- The British were forced to usher in peace by declaring their **territory as damni-kol area**.

## Buchanan Journals

In the early nineteenth century, **Buchanan** travelled through the Rajmahal hills. Buchanan's journal gives us glimpses of the tribes of Rajmahal hill. The tribes were known as Paharias. They depended on forest produce and practiced shifting cultivation. From the forests they **collected mahua a flower** for food, silk cocoons and resin for sale, and wood for charcoal production. They lived in hutments within tamarind groves, and rested in the shade of mango trees.



## Munda Rebellion (Ulgulan Revolt)

**Timeline:** 1899-1900

**Region Involved:** Chota Nagpur Region

**Prominent Leader:** Birsa Munda

In 1899-1900, the Mundas in the **region south of Ranchi** rose under **Birsa Munda**. This uprising is also known as the **Ulgulan revolt** which means "great commotion".

During the **19th Century**, the **British colonial system intensified** the transformation of the tribal agricultural system into a feudal state. The **Chiefs in the Chhotanagpur** invited the non-tribal peasantry to settle on and cultivate the land, which led to the alienation of the lands held by the tribals. By 1874, Mundas had completely lost their rights over land and had been reduced to the position of farm laborers. The incident of "**forced labour**" or "**beth begari**" also increased dramatically. The British also used to send catholic missions in the area that led to cultural interference. To deal with the twin challenges of agrarian breakdown and culture change, these tribals under the leadership of Birsa Munda responded through a series of revolts and uprisings. Birsa urged the tribals to destroy "**Ravana**" (**Dikus/outsidere and Europeans**) and establish a kingdom under his leadership.

The Mundas claimed Chhotanagpur as their area in 1879. British armed forces were then deployed.

### Cause of the Uprising

- **Erosion of Khuntkatti system:** Khuntkatti system of the Mundas was actually a joint ownership or holding of land by tribal lineage. This system was replaced with the **Zamindari system by 1874**, with the advent of the British and the outsider-Zamindars. This caused **indebtedness and forced labour among the tribals**.
- Exploitation by money-lenders and forest contractors. Landlords and moneylenders were taking over their land.
- Money lending at very high-interest rates, and lack of legal knowledge of Mundas, used

to deprive these tribesmen of their land and wealth.

- Munda's traditional culture was criticised by missionaries.

**Result:** Birsa was captured and imprisoned.

**Significance:** The Munda rebellion forced the British government to introduce the "Chotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1908". This Act prevented the transfer of tribal land to the non-tribal parties so that the land of the tribals could not be easily taken over by dikus.

## Santhal Rebellion

**Timeline:** 1855-56

**Region Involved:** Rajmahal hills

**Prominent Leader:** Sidhu and Kanhu

The Santhal rebellion (also known as the Santhal Hool) was a revolt by the Santhal in present-day Jharkhand, India, against the British East India Company and the zamindari system.

The Santhals were forest dwellers who relied on forest for survival. In 1832, the East India Company demarcated the **Damin-i-Koh region (forested- hilly areas of Rajmahal hills)** in present-day Jharkhand and invited Santhals to settle there. As Britishers promised them land and economic opportunities, many Santhals came to settle in this region.

However, the economy was **soon controlled by mahajans and zamindars**, who were employed by the British East India Company as tax-collecting middlemen. Many Santhals had fallen prey to unethical money lending. They were given loans at huge interest rates. Their farms were forcibly confiscated and they were forced into bonded labour when they were unable to repay the loan.

**Under Sidhu and Kanhu**, two brothers, the Santhals proclaimed an end to Company rule, and declared the area between **Bhagalpur and Rajmahal as autonomous**.



## Cause of the Uprising

- The British imposed high taxes on Santhal's land, and money had to be borrowed to pay off obligations.
- Demand of huge interest rates by moneylender
- Confiscation of Santhals farms by Zamindars
- Forcing Santhals into forced labour if unable to repay the loan

**Result:** The rebellion was suppressed by 1856.

## Significance

- The Santhal Pargana was formed from the districts of **Bhagalpur and Birbhum** after the Santhal Revolt of 1855-56. The pargana was supposed to have its own set of laws.
- The **colonial state hoped** that by creating a new territory for the Santhals and imposing some special laws within it, the Santhals could be conciliated.

## Khond Uprisings

**Timeline:** 1837-1856

**Region Involved:** Odisha to the Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam district

**Prominent Leader:** Chakra Bisoi

Between 1837 and 1856, the Khonds of the mountainous areas spanning from **Odisha to the Andhra Pradesh districts of Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam** revolted against Company control.

**Chakra Bisoi**, led the Khonds who were joined by the Ghumsar, Kalahandi and other tribals to oppose the suppression of human sacrifice, new taxes, and the entry of zamindars into their areas.

**Causes of the Uprising:** Influx of Zamindars and Moneylenders into tribal regions, prohibition of the practice of '**Mariah**' (a form of **human sacrifice** that the British government outlawed).

**Result:** With Chakra Bisoi's disappearance, the uprising came to an end.

## Bhil Revolts

**Timeline:** 1818-31, 1913.

**Region Involved:** region of Western Ghats, South Rajasthan

**Prominent Leader:** Seva Ram in 1925, Govind Guru in South Rajasthan, 1913.

The Bhils lived in the Western Ghats and controlled the mountain passes between the north and the Deccan. In the year 1818, all the Bhil tribal states joined hands with the British Administration to conclude a treaty. Now, the British became the real master as they were now handed over the right of intervention and policy formation for both the external and internal affairs of the state. Further, the Bhils were deprived of the rights to consume and use various products that were produced abundantly in the forest. A ban was imposed on the domestic consumption and trade of certain products in the nearby villages and tribes. **For example, the cutting of Mango and Malwa trees was prohibited.**

Bhil revolted against Company rule in 1818-19.

Later, a reformer, **Govind Guru** helped **the Bhils of south Rajasthan (Banswara, Sunth states)** to organize themselves to fight for a Bhil Raj by 1913.

## Cause of the Uprising

- British expansion in Bhil's area.
- **Administrative changes brought by the British** in Bhil's territory.
  - ♦ Bhils were deprived of the rights to consume and use various products that were produced abundantly in the forest.
  - ♦ The natives of the tribe were prohibited to distill liquor openly in their homes.
  - ♦ A ban was imposed on the domestic consumption and trade of certain products in the nearby villages and tribes.
- The money-lenders exploited the Bhils economically. They would seize their lands, in reply to their inability to pay back the loans.



**Result: British used both force and conciliatory efforts** to control the uprising. However, the Bhils revolted again in 1825, 1831 and in 1846.

### Koli Risings

**Timeline:** 1829, 1839, 1844-48

**Region Involved:** Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh

**Causes of the Uprising:** Against the British rule for dismantling the forests, new order of administration brought by the British in 1829 & 1839.

Koli community is an ethnic group mostly found in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh. They rose up in rebellion against the Company's rule in 1829, 1839 and again during 1844-48.

### Koya Revolts

**Timeline:** 1803, 1840, 1845, 1858, 1861, 1862 and 1879-80

**Region Involved:** Eastern Godavari track (now Andhra)

**Prominent Leader:** Tomma Sora (1879-80) and Raja Anantayyar (1886)

Koyas of the eastern Godavari track (modern Andhra) rebelled many times along with Khonda Sara chiefs. In 1879-80, they rose under Tomma Sora's leadership. After the death of Tomma Sora in 1886, Raja Anantayyar organized another rebellion.

#### Cause of the Revolt

They had grievances against police and moneylender oppression, new regulations, and the denial of their traditional rights over forest areas.

### Ramosi Risings

**Timeline:** 1822, 1825-26

**Region Involved:** Western Ghats

**Prominent Leaders:** Chittur Singh in 1822, Umaji Naik of Poona and Bapu Trimbakji Sawant in 1825

The Ramosis are the Western Ghats hill tribes. **After the annexation of the Maratha territories** by the British, the Ramosis, who had been employed by the Maratha administration, lost their means of livelihood.

Ramosis resented the policy of annexation. They had not accepted British control or the British system of administration. They rose **under Chittur Singh** in 1822 and plundered the country around Satara.

**Cause of the Uprising:** British policy of annexation

#### Result

- British forces restored order in the area.
- The British followed a pacifist policy towards the Ramosis, and even recruited some of them into the hill police.

## TRIBAL REVOLTS OF NORTH EAST

### Khasi Uprising

**Timeline:** 1830-33

**Region Involved:** Assam's mountainous territory between the Jaintia and Garo hills

**Prominent Leaders:** Tirath Singh

The Khasis are a primitive tribe living in Assam's mountainous territory between the Jaintia and Garo hills. The **East India Company** sought to create a route connecting the Brahmaputra Valley and Sylhet after occupying the steep terrain between the **Garo and Jaintia Hills**. A considerable number of outsiders, including Englishmen, Bengalis, and plains labourers, came to these regions for this purpose. The Khasis organised themselves under **Tirath Singh** to drive away the outsiders from the plains. The uprising developed into a popular revolt against British rule in the area.

**Cause of the Uprising:** British plan to create a route connecting the Brahmaputra Valley and Sylhet forced Khasis to serve as laborers



## Result

- British military forces had suppressed the revolt.
- They imposed an economic embargo on Khasi land, and burned down Khasi villages.

## Singphos Rebellion

**Timeline:** 1830

**Region Involved:** Assam

**Prominent Leader:** Chief Nirang Phidu

**Singphos** revolt took place in 1830 in Assam. It was immediately quelled by the British but they continued to organize revolts. The British political agent was killed in an insurrection in 1839. Chief Nirang Phidu led an uprising in 1843, which involved an attack on the British garrison and the death of many soldiers.

**Cause of the Uprising:** Against the occupation of their region by Britishers.

**Result:** The Rebellion was ultimately suppressed.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Many tribal conflicts occurred during the rule of the British. The primary causes of these revolts were encroachment of the tribal land by the people from plains. None of the revolts succeeded. All of them were brutally suppressed. But it certainly exposed the true nature of the British government which was based on brutality and support to privileged classes against poor and exploited ones.

**How was the Mainland Tribal Revolt different from the North-Eastern Tribal Revolts?**

### Mainland tribal rebellions

The mainland tribal rebellions were sparked off by a number of factors. Some of the factors are:

- Land settlements of the British **affected the joint ownership tradition** (Tribe and their forest land) **among the tribals** and disrupted their social fabric.

- Influx of non-tribals to Tribal areas.
- Shifting cultivation in forests was curbed
- Restricting timber use and grazing
- Exploitation by the police, traders and money-lenders
- Christian missionaries came to these regions and their efforts interfered with the traditional customs of the tribals.

### North East Tribal rebellion

- The north eastern tribal revolts were often in **favour of political autonomy** within the Indian Union or complete independence.
- The Northeast tribal movements were not forest-based or agrarian revolts as these tribals were generally in control of land and forest area. The British entered the north-eastern areas much later than the mainland tribal areas.
- The North East tribal revolts under the British continued for a longer time than the non-frontier tribal movements.

## Weaknesses of People's Uprisings

- **Uprising was localised:** These uprisings drew a large number of participants but were, in fact, localised and occurred at different times in different regions.
- **Local Grievances:** They mostly arose out of local grievances.
- **Semi Feudal Leadership:** The leadership was semi-feudal in character, backward looking, traditional in outlook and their resistance did not offer alternatives to the existing social set-up.
- **Pacified Easily:** Those who were not so uncooperative or obstinate were pacified through concessions by the authorities.
- **Old methods used:** The methods and arms used by the fighters in these uprisings were practically obsolete compared to the weapons and strategy—as well as deception and chicanery—employed by their opponents.



The Europeans had started to set up shop in India around the 17th century. Within a span of a couple of decades, they had already managed to become a headache to many sections of the Indian population, poor or otherwise. The community that had to bear the brunt of impact of European colonization at large were the peasants and the indigenous tribes of erstwhile India. Their exploitation and grievances knew no bounds.

Colonial economic policies, the new land revenue system, the colonial administrative and judicial systems, and the ruin of handicrafts led to the overcrowding of land. People who lost their employment due to all the mentioned British policies turned towards agriculture for sustaining their livelihood. As a result, the agrarian structure in India got transformed and resulted in impoverishing the peasantry.

In the zamindari areas, the peasants were at the mercy of the powerful zamindar who forced them to begar and extorted illegal dues from the peasants. In the ryotwari areas, the government had itself levied exorbitant land taxes. This forced the peasants into the **vicious cycle of eternal debt**. Eventually, the peasants were reduced to mere share-croppers and landless laborers. When these **peasants couldn't take it any longer, they resisted and revolted against their oppressors**. However, they eventually realized that the ultimate enemy was the colonial state. Let us study in detail about the peasant movement in India.

#### In the Indian parlance, who is a peasant?

Various authors have derived varied definitions of peasants. It may range from someone with a small and marginal land-holding to someone who may merely be a sharecropper or a land-tenant. Either way, one has to remember that peasants were the ones who tilled the land and were subjected to heavy rents.

## FACTORS THAT CAUSED PEASANT MOVEMENTS

### STAGNATION AND DETERIORATION OF AGRICULTURE

- **Low Yields:** As a result of overcrowding of agriculture, excessive land revenue demand, growth of landlordism, increasing indebtedness, and the growing impoverishment of the cultivators, Indian agriculture began to stagnate. It even deteriorated resulting in **extremely low yields per acre**.
- **Fragmentation of land:** Overcrowding of agriculture and increase in subinfeudation led to subdivision and fragmentation of land into smallholdings most of which could not maintain their cultivators. The extreme poverty of the majority of peasants left them without any resources to improve agriculture. For example, using better cattle and seeds, more manure and fertilizers, and improved techniques of production.
- **No investment:** In England and other European countries, the rich landlords often invested capital in land to increase its productivity with a view to share in the increased income. But in India the landlords, both old and new, performed no useful function. They were mere rent-receivers who had often no roots in land and who took no personal interest in the land beyond collecting rent. The landlords preferred to increase their income by further squeezing their tenants rather than by making productive investments in their lands.
- **Irresponsible Government:** The Government could have helped in improving and modernizing agriculture. But the Government refused to recognise any such responsibility. A characteristic of the financial system of British India was that, while the main burden of taxation fell on the shoulders of the peasant, the Government spent only a very small part of it on peasants. At a time when agriculture



all over the world was being modernized and revolutionized, Indian agriculture was technologically stagnating, hardly any modern machinery was used.

## **COMMERCIALIZATION OF AGRICULTURE**

One of the major aspects of the colonial exploitation of the Indian peasants was the commercialization of agriculture.

### **What is commercialization of agriculture?**

The indigenous peasants had practiced subsistence agriculture for centuries together and they had basically developed a pastoral-agrarian economy over the years. As per tradition, the land was usually held in joint-ownership. The subsistence agriculture was either in the form of multi-cropping systems, seasonal cropping systems or shifting cultivation also known as Jhum cultivation or Podu cultivation in different geographical regions in India.

However, after the arrival of Britishers, the practice of agriculture was extended in a settled form by the Government. Subsistence or Shifting cultivation was curbed. Practice of mono-cropping was inculcated by the Britishers in India. The peasants were forced to grow cash crops like indigo, cotton etc. and they were unfortunately never even remunerated enough for these cash crops. Thus, on the very soil where millets and rice and wheat were grown, the peasants were made to sow seeds of crops which weren't desirable to them. The peasants were also forced to take a monetary advance from the British planters and this advance was used by the planters to compel peasants to grow cash crops.

### **Why was agriculture commercialized?**

During the early 1860s, America was witnessing a civil war. This led to inflated prices of cotton and thus a rise in cotton exports. The British Company certainly wanted to have a share of the profitable export business. The planters who compelled the peasants to grow cash crops also felt that they cannot run a sustainable business if the peasants

were remunerated fairly. Thus, they resorted to the use of force or fraud to manipulate the peasants into practicing agriculture on a commercial basis.

### **Impacts of commercialization of agriculture**

A huge amount of stress and discontent was created due to the commercialization of agriculture. The process led to a cascading level of impacts which eventually led to an uproar on part of the peasants. Following are the impacts of commercialization of agriculture:

- **Illegal land evictions:** Peasants who refused to sow what the Company Planters' asked for, were evicted from his land fraudulently. The zamindars tried to enhance the land rents beyond legal limits and tried to prevent the tenants from acquiring any occupancy rights. The zamindars even led the seizure of the crops and cattle of the peasants.
- **Sidelining of traditional zamindars:** The Indian rural village system had a tradition which was based on a jajmani system wherein the zamindar would be a jajman to many other agriculturists and artisans or workers in the village. Since this relationship was based more on the Barter system, the peasants had a profitable turnover. However, these traditional zamindars and poligars were sidelined in rank by government officials and a new class of merchants and money-lenders was introduced to the peasants. These traditional zamindars or poligars lost control of their land and revenues due to colonial rule. Since the new class of merchants and money-lenders were not in a traditional relationship with the peasants, they behaved very ruthlessly with the peasants and facilitated unnecessary exactions from the peasants.
- **Mushrooming of money lenders:** The situation was worsened by a succession of bad harvests in some seasons. To pay the land revenue under these conditions, the peasants had to go to the newly introduced moneylenders who



took the opportunity to further tighten his grip on the peasants and their lands. The peasants, thus, held these moneylenders responsible for the cause of their miseries.

- Increase in rents of land: Since numerous middle-men were introduced in the system by the government officials, everyone wanted a share in the cake. Thus, the levy of taxes and land revenue increased manifold by the time it came down to the peasants.
- Reduction to share-croppers and landless labourers: Due to illegal evictions, the peasant was reduced to the status of a tenant-at-will or a share-cropper or merely a landless laborer on his own land. He didn't even have the requisite remedy to win back his land due to being caught up in the vicious cycle of the land debt.

### IMPOVERISHMENT OF PEASANTRY

- **Impacts of different settlements:** In the very beginning of British rule in Bengal, the policy of Clive and Warren Hastings of extracting the largest possible land revenue had led to **such devastation** that even Cornwallis complained that one-third of Bengal had been transformed into "a jungle inhabited only by wild beasts". In the **Permanent settlement** areas, peasants were left to the **mercy of the zamindars who raised rents to unbearable limits**, compelled them to pay illegal dues and to perform **forced labour or begar**, and oppressed them in diverse other ways. The condition of the **cultivators in the Ryotwari and Mahalwari** areas was no better. Here the Government took the place of the **zamindars and levied excessive land revenue which was in the beginning fixed as high as one-third to one-half of the produce**.
- No economic return to the farmers: The evil of high revenue demand was made worse by the fact that the peasants got little economic return for it. The Government spent very little on improving agriculture. The **British spent** almost its entire income for meeting the needs

of British-Indian administration, making the payments of direct and indirect tribute to England, and serving the interests of British trade and industry.

- Rigid manner of revenue collection: The harmful effects of an excessive land revenue demand were further heightened by the rigid manner of its collection. Land revenue had to be paid promptly on the fixed dates even if the harvest had been below normal or had failed completely. Whenever the peasant failed to pay land revenue, the Government put up his land on sale to collect the arrears of revenue. But in most cases the peasant himself took this step and sold part of his land to meet in time the government demand. In either case he lost his land.
- Debt Trap: The inability to pay revenue drove the peasant to borrow money at high rates of interest from the money-lender. He preferred getting into debt by mortgaging his land to a money-lender or to a rich peasant neighbour losing it outright. He was also forced to go to the money-lender whenever he found it impossible to make his two ends meet. But once in debt he found it difficult to get out of it. The money-lender charged high rates of interest and got the peasant deeper and deeper into debt till he parted with his land. The money-lender was greatly helped by the new legal system and the new revenue policy.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF PEASANT MOVEMENTS IN INDIA

#### PRE 1857

- Peasant movement was characterized by movements that had some religious overtones to its nature.
- They had limited territorial reach.
- The leadership was not that of a national level. The agenda was not anti-colonial or nationalist in nature but rather to address the local grievances.



- The nature of the movement was semi feudal. They were backward looking and traditional in outlook. Their basic objective was to restore earlier forms of rule and social relations. The peasants were not aware of their legal rights and never asserted their rights inside or outside of court.
- It gave a certain level of self-confidence to the aggrieved peasants that they could stand up for themselves and thus their collective efforts and troubles across the country finally culminated into a nearly nationwide revolt of 1857.

### POST 1857

Post 1857 revolt, the government showed a policy of appeasement towards the indigenous population since it wanted to minimize any future chances of a revolt the kind of seen in 1857. Let us see a few of the characteristics of the Peasant movements after 1857.

- The peasants now fought directly for their own demands, centered almost wholly on economic issues, but not religious and against their immediate enemies, foreign planters and indigenous zamindars and moneylenders.
- Peasant protest after 1857 was the result of excessive and unbearable oppression, undue and unusual deprivation and exploitation, and a threat to the peasant's existing, established position. The peasant often rebelled only when he felt that it was not possible to carry on in the existing manner.
- Peasant movement after 1857 (like pre 1857) also lacked continuity of struggle or long-term organization. Once the specific objectives of a movement were achieved, its organization, also peasant solidarity built around it, dissolved and disappeared. Thus, the Indigo strike, the Pabna agrarian leagues and the social-boycott movement of the Deccan riots left behind no successors.

- The territorial reach of these movements was also limited.
- The peasant movements in this phase were carried out by well-informed peasants who knew their legal rights and didn't shy away from asserting those. For example, peasants did not fight for land ownership or against landlordism but against eviction and undue enhancement of rent. Peasants did not object to paying interest on the sums he had borrowed; but against fraud by the moneylender and when the moneylender deprived the peasant of his land.
- The Indian peasants showed great courage and a spirit of sacrifice, remarkable organizational abilities, and a solidarity that cut across religious and caste lines. They were also able to wring considerable concessions from the colonial state.
- The movements were highly consolidated and had clearly defined manifestos.

### **Phases of Peasant Movements in India**

**The peasant movements in India can broadly be grouped in three distinct time phases:**

#### **The Initial Phase (1857-1921)**

The peasant movements in this phase were characterized by **absence of proper leadership**. During this period the main reason for spontaneous peasant uprising in different parts of the country was **high handedness of zamindars** or landlords along with the **excessive rates of land revenue**. This phase is also characterized by **periodic famines** and **economic depression**, leading to a number of peasant revolts. **Notable peasant movements of this phase are:**

- **The Santhal rebellion (1855)**
- **The Maratha uprising (1875)**
- **The Bengal tenants struggles (1870-85)**
- **Champaran Satyagraha (1917-18)**
- **The Kheda satyagraha (1918)**
- **Moplah Rebellion (1921)**



**Note:** The Santhal rebellion, also known as a **Santhal Hul**, is often classified as a **tribal movement** by many scholars for our literary understanding. However, this movement comprised lower-class peasants as well. Therefore, the Santhal Movement can be studied both under the Peasant and the Tribal Movements.

### The Second Phase (1923-1946)

This phase was marked by the emergence of the **class conscious peasant organizations**. The Congress policy of safeguarding the interests of zamindars and landlords led to the **emergence of these independent class organizations of kisans in rural India**. **Examples of Peasant Movements include:**

- The **Kisan Sabha** movement started in Bihar under the leadership of **Swami Sahajanand Saraswati in 1929**.
- The **All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS)** was formed at the **Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress (INC) in April 1936** with **Swami Sahajanand Saraswati elected as first president**. Communists were the major force that mobilized the peasants. **Communist Party of India (CPI)** started serious engagement with the peasantry after the formation of the All India Kisan Sabha.
- The **Tebhaga movement was launched in Bengal in 1946-47 and the Telangana movement was launched in Telangana in 1946-51**.

### Post-independence phase (after 1947)

This phase witnessed the uninterrupted continuity of the agrarian movements due to the **failure of the ruling party** to resolve any of the basic problems of the working masses of rural India. The land reforms had only intensified the agrarian crisis. The Government had not only **failed in providing relief** to the vast bulk of deficit farmers and agricultural labours, its agrarian policy had also aggravated their miseries. This

resulted in **discontent in agrarian society** even after independence and led to a series of peasant struggles in different parts of the country.

## PEASANT MOVEMENTS BEFORE 1857

### NARKELBERIA UPRISING (1782-1831)

It is often considered the first armed peasant uprising against the British. There were two main grave causes of the Narkelberia revolt, namely the British Indigo Planters and the Hindu Zamindars. Firstly, the British Indigo Planters had subjected the peasantry into forced plantation of Indigo and did not even pay up the due prices of the harvested indigo. This pushed the peasants into stark poverty and starvation. Secondly, the Zamindars (most of them who were Hindus) imposed a beard-tax on the Faraizis who were supposedly Muslim peasants. (Keeping a beard was considered as one of the essential practices by the Muslim peasants and a beard-tax only seemed to infringe on their religious freedom and religious rights.) This revolt later merged into the Wahabi movement.

#### Who were Faraizis?

The Faraizis were mainly the followers of a Muslim sect that was founded by **Haji Shariat-Allah of Faridpur in Eastern Bengal**. They majorly advocated radical religious, social and political changes.

Place of the revolt	Popular leader
West Bengal (24 paraganas)	Mir Nithar Ali aka Titu Mir.

### FARAIZI REVOLT (1838-1857)

The Faraizi sect was founded by Haji Shariatullah of Faridpur. Originally the Faraizi movement was fuelled by the **grievances of rack-rented and evicted peasants** against landlords and British rulers. The Faraizis under **Dadu Miyan** (the son of Haji Shariatullah) became united as a religious sect with an egalitarian ideology. His simple way



of teaching and belief that **all men are equal and land belongs to god and no one has the right to levy tax on it appealed to the common peasants.**

The Faraizis under the leadership of Dadu Miyan not only revolted for social changes but also ventured further into changing the polity and the religious tenets of the time. The Faraizis set up parallel administration in some parts of Eastern Bengal and established village courts to settle the peasant's disputes. The aim was to expel the English intruders from the whole of Bengal.

The government and zamindars forces crushed the revolt and Dadu Miyan was imprisoned.

Places of the revolt	Popular leader
Bengal	Dadu Miyan

### PAGAL PANTHIS (1825 TO 1835)

A semi-religious group mainly constituting of the Hajong and the Garo tribes of Mymensingh District (in erstwhile Bengal) was commonly revered as the Pagal Panthis. This Pagal Panthi sect was founded by Karam Shah. However, the tribals were better consolidated by the time Tipu Shah took over the reins from Karam Shah, his father. For about almost a decade the pagal panthis refused to pay land rents above a certain stipulated limit and resorted to attack on the houses of the wealthy zamindars. Though the government has introduced an equitable arrangement to protect these peasants, the movement was still suppressed in a violent manner.

Places of the revolt	Popular leader
Erstwhile Bengal	Karam Shah and Tipu Shah

### MOPLAH/MAPPILA UPRISINGS/MALABAR UPRISING (1836-1854 & 1920)

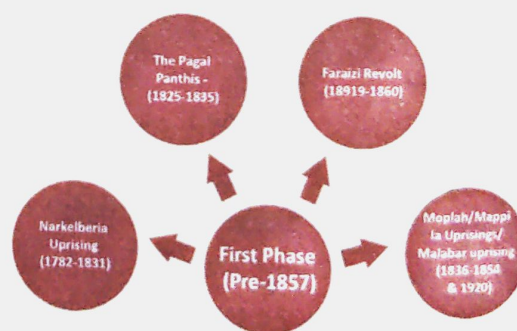
Among the various peasant uprisings that posed a serious challenge to colonial rule the Mappila uprisings of Malabar occupy an important place. **Mappilas were the descendants of the Arab settlers**

**and converted Hindus.** Majority of them were cultivating tenants, landless labourers, petty traders and fishermen. The British occupation of Malabar in the last decade of the eighteenth century and the consequent changes that the British introduced in the land revenue administration of the area brought unbearable hardship in the life of the Mappilas.

Over-assessment, illegal taxes, eviction from land, hostile attitude of Government officials were some of the many reasons that made the Mappilas rebel against the British and the landlords. Nearly 22 revolts took place over a span of two decades from 1836 and 1854, however they all were squashed successfully.

The second wave of Moplah uprising came around the Non-cooperation movement, whereby the Khilafat supporters and the Congress had aligned their goals together. However, the rift between the Hindus and the Muslims had distanced the congress from the Moplahs and the second wave of Moplah uprising eventually subdued by 1921.

Places of the revolt	Popular leaders
Malabar	M.K. Gandhi, Shaukat Ali, and Maulana Azad (in second moplah uprising)



### PEASANT MOVEMENTS AFTER 1857

#### INDIGO REVOLT (1859-60)

Before the invention and the large-scale production of the synthetic dyes, natural dyes were



in huge demand across the globe; indigo being one of the important natural dye amongst them. Thus, the European planters in India started with indigo production on Indian soil on a large scale. The peasants in Bengal were subjected to forceful plantation of Indigo, instead of better paying crops like rice. This indigo was processed in factories set up in the rural (mofussil) areas.

The indigo planters forced the peasants to take advance sums and enter into fraudulent contracts. The planters used this advance as an excuse to force the peasants to sow indigo and the contracts further intimidated the peasants. The planters resorted to unethical means like kidnappings, flogging, illegal confinements of the peasants, attacks on their women and children, seizure of their cattle, burning and demolition of peasant's houses and destruction of their standing crops. Eventually the pressure to grow indigo was too much to bear for the peasants.

Under the able leadership of Digambar Biswas and Bishnu Biswas, the peasants decided not to grow indigo on their lands anymore. Peasants met the pressure of the planters and their lathiyals (retainers) backed by the police and the courts, with great resistance. The planters tried methods like enhanced rents and evictions, but all went to vain. The peasants also organized a counter force against the planters' attacks. Gradually the ryots learned to use the legal machinery and pooled money and initiated legal action using collected funds.

The Bengali intelligentsia too played a significant role in the Indigo revolt by supporting the claims of the peasants through local newspaper campaigns, organization of mass meetings, and preparation of memoranda on peasants' grievances and supporting them in the legal battles by being their counsel.

- Special mention of Harish Chandra Mukherji, editor of the newspaper 'Hindoo Patriot' and Din Bandhu Mitra's play, 'Neel Darpan' should be made-These two actors played a major role in bringing about great fame to the cause of the peasants and their oppression at the hands of their Indigo planters.

- Also, Missionaries were another group which extended active support to the indigo ryots in their struggle.

The Government's response to the Indigo Revolt was rather restrained and not harsh as in the case of civil rebellions and tribal uprisings. It had also undergone the harrowing experience of the Santhal uprising and the Revolt of 1857. Thus, the government decided to pay heed to the Indigo revolt and set-up an Indigo commission to investigate the matter. Based on the recommendations of the commission, the government then issued a notification in November 1860 that the ryots shall no longer be compelled to grow indigo against their wishes and that all disputes will be settled by legal means. Moreover, the planters by then had already closed shop since fair payments to the peasants only meant narrow or negligible profits to them in the global markets.

A major reason for the success of the Indigo Revolt was the tremendous initiative, cooperation, organization and discipline of the ryots. Another was the complete unity among Hindu and Muslim peasants. Leadership for the movement was provided by the more well-off ryots and in some cases by petty zamindars, moneylenders and ex-employees of the planters. Intelligentsia of Bengal also supported the peasant's cause by organizing a powerful campaign in support of the rebellious peasantry.

The indigo revolt happened at the ripe time when the tide of nationalism and anti-colonialism had taken over the minds of the Indians.

Places of the revolt	Popular leaders
Bengal	Bishnu Biswas and Diagambar Biswas

### **PABNA AGRARIAN LEAGUES (1870s-1880s)**

After the revolt of 1857 and the Indigo Revolution, the peasants had grown more aware of the strength in unity and of their legal rights.



This awareness however was not welcomed by the wealthy zamindars of Bengal. The zamindars of the Eastern Bengal had enhanced the land rents beyond the legal limits and were preventing the tenants from acquiring occupancy rights under Act X of 1859. Zamindars also tried to achieve this through illegal coercive methods such as forced eviction and seizure of crops and cattle as well as by dragging the tenants into costly litigation in the courts.

Ultimately, the peasants of the Yusufshahi paragona in Pabna district of East Bengal organized an agrarian league to resist the demands of the zamindars. The league also organized a 'rent strike' whereby the ryots had refused to pay up the enhanced land rents and had challenged the erratic demands of the zamindars in the court of law. Funds were pooled to fight the court cases. This struggle spread throughout Pabna and to other parts of East Bengal. The best part of this struggle was that it was mainly a non-violent one, using mostly legal remedies to address Peasants' grievances. However, few violence had occurred, it only occurred when the zamindars tried to compel the ryots to submit to their terms by force. There were only a few cases of looting of the houses of the zamindars. A few attacks on police stations took place and the peasants also resisted attempts to execute court decrees.

The Government rose to the defence of the zamindars wherever violence took place. Peasants were then arrested on a large scale. But it assumed a position of neutrality as far as legal battles or peaceful agitations were concerned. Many peasants were successful in acquiring their occupancy rights and were able to resist enhanced rents. The government promised to undertake legislation to protect the tenants from the wrath of the zamindari oppression and thus, in 1885, the Bengal Tenancy Act was passed. This too was supported by a great deal of young Indian intelligentsia.

The **aim of the Pabna uprising was limited to the redressal** of the immediate grievances of the peasants and the enforcement of the existing legal

rights and norms. This persuaded the zamindars and the colonial regime to reconcile themselves to the movement. The movement was not aimed at the zamindari system. It also did not have at any stage an anti-colonial political edge. The agrarian leagues kept within the bounds of law, used the legal machinery to fight the zamindars, and raised no anti-British demands. The leaders often argued that they were against zamindars and not the British.

Once again the Bengal peasants showed complete **Hindu-Muslim solidarity**, even though the majority of the ryots were Muslim and the majority of zamindars Hindu. There was also no effort to create peasant solidarity on the grounds of religion or caste. In this case, too, a number of young Indian intellectuals supported the peasants' cause. These included **Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and R.C. Dutt**. Later, in the early 1880s, during the discussion of the Bengal Tenancy Bill, the Indian Association, led by **Surendranath Banerjee, Anand Mohan Bose and Dwarkanath Ganguli**, campaigned for the rights of tenants.

Places of the revolt	Popular leaders
East Bengal, Pabna	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, R.C. Dutt, Surendranath Banerjee, Anand Mohan Bose and Dwarkanath Ganguli

### **DECCAN RIOTS 1870s**

A major agrarian outbreak occurred in the **Poona and Ahmednagar districts of Maharashtra** in 1875. Here, as part of the Ryotwari system, land revenue was settled directly with the peasant who was also recognized as the owner of his land. The peasants found it difficult to pay land revenue without getting into the clutches of the moneylender and increasingly losing his land. The peasants unfortunately got caught up in the vicious debt trap, with their money lenders being the primary exploiter and the primary beneficiary. These moneylenders were mostly outsiders, i.e., mostly Gujaratis and Marwadis.



In 1874, this growing tension between the money lenders and the peasants resulted into an outbreak wherein the ryots organized a social boycott movement against the so called 'outsider' moneylenders. They refused to buy from their shops. No peasant would cultivate their fields. The bulletedars (village servants) — barbers, washermen, carpenters, ironsmiths, shoemakers and others would not serve moneylenders. This social boycott spread rapidly to the villages of Poona, Ahmednagar, Solapur and Satara districts. Eventually, the social boycott took an unpleasant turn and was transformed into agrarian riots wherein there were systemic attacks on the moneylenders' houses and their shops.

The debt bonds and financial deeds (**moneylenders' instruments of oppression**) too were seized and publicly burnt. This movement was successfully suppressed by the government. However, the government did pass the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act in 1879 as a conciliatory measure.

#### Three other developments occurred at this time:

During the early 1860s, **the American Civil War** had led to a rise in cotton exports which had pushed up prices.

The **end of the Civil War** in 1864 brought about an **acute depression in cotton exports and a crash in prices**.

In 1867, the Government **raised land revenue by nearly 50 per cent**. The situation was worsened by a succession of bad harvests.

Once again, the modern nationalist intelligentsia of Maharashtra supported the peasants' cause. Already, in 1873-74, the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, led by Justice Ranade, had organized a successful campaign among the peasants, as well as at Poona and Bombay, against the land revenue settlement of 1867. The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha as well as many of the nationalist newspapers also supported the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Bill.

Places of the revolt	Popular leaders
Deccan region of Western India (Mostly Maharashtra)	Nationalist intelligentsia of Maharashtra like Justice Ranade

**Note:** Kheda, Champaran, The Kisan Sabha Movement, Bardoli Satyagrah, Tebhaga, Telangana movements are covered in chapters 18, 20 and 28 respectively

## ANALYSIS OF THE PEASANT MOVEMENTS

- **Lack of an understanding of colonialism:** Lack of focus on colonization was nothing but short-sightedness on part of the peasants. They failed to pin the entire blame of their plight on the colonizers.
- **No ideology:** The 19th century peasants did not possess a new ideology and a new social, economic and political programme based on an analysis of the newly constituted colonial society. They lacked a positive conception of an alternative society — a conception which would unite the people in a common struggle on a wide regional and all-India plane and help develop long-term political movements.
- **Lack of long-term organization:** Peasant movement lacked continuity of struggle or long-term organization. **Once the specific objectives of a movement were achieved**, its organization, also peasant solidarity built around it, **dissolved and disappeared**.
- **Limitation of Territorial reach:** The territorial reach of the peasant movements was also limited. They were confined to particular localities with no mutual communication or linkages.



The second half of the 19th century witnessed the full flowering of national political consciousness and the growth of an organized national movement in India. In other words, India was witnessing the rise of **Modern Nationalism**.

The rise and growth of Indian nationalism has been traditionally explained in terms of Indian response to the British Raj **through creation of new institutions, new opportunities, resources**, etc. Finally, **the Indian National Congress** was formed in **December 1885**. Under the leadership of Indian National Congress, **Indians waged a prolonged and courageous struggle for independence from foreign rule**, a struggle which India finally won on 15 August 1947.

## FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR GROWTH OF MODERN NATIONALISM

### ADMINISTRATIVE UNIFICATION OF THE COUNTRY

The British had gradually introduced **a uniform and modern system of government throughout India** and thus unified it administratively. A professional civil service, a unified judiciary and codified civil and criminal laws throughout the country imparted a new dimension of political unity.

- **Professional civil service:** During Cornwallis (governor-general from 1786 to 93), Civil servants' salaries were raised and promotions were based on seniority. Under the Charter Act, 1853, future recruitment of civil servants was done through an open competition. However, Indians were barred from high positions from the start. Lytton established the Statutory Civil Service in 1878-79, with one-sixth of covenant posts filled by Indians of high families through nominations by local governments subject to approval by the secretary of state and the viceroy. Although the system failed.
- **Unified Judiciary:** Under Warren Hastings (1772-1785), district Diwani Adalats was formed in districts to adjudicate civil disputes and district Fauzdari Adalats was established

to deal with criminal matters and were placed under Indian officials who were aided by Qazis and Muftis. **Under Cornwallis (1786-1793) the Circuit Courts** were established at Calcutta, Deccan, Murshidabad, and Patna. Collector was now only in charge of revenue administration and had no magisterial powers. A **Sadar Diwani Adalat and a Sadar Nizamat Adalat** were established at **Allahabad under William Bentick (1828-33)**. He designated Persian and a vernacular language as official languages for the lower courts.

### ECONOMIC UNIFICATION OF THE COUNTRY

The British' urge for economic penetration in India and its commercial exploitation (all in British interests) were the driving forces behind the planned development of modern means of transport and communication such as railways, roads, electricity and telegraph.

- The destruction of the rural and local self-sufficient economy and the introduction of modern trade and industries on an all-India scale had made India's economic life unified. For example, if famine or scarcity occurred in one part of India, prices and availability of food stuffs were affected in all other parts of the country too.
- The introduction of the railways, telegraph and a unified postal system had brought the different parts of the country together. Especially the leaders, from different regions together. This was important for the exchange of political ideas and for mobilization and organization of public opinion on political and economic issues.

### ASSIMILATION OF MODERN WESTERN IDEAS

#### Prominent nationalist newspapers of the Period

Some of the prominent nationalist newspapers of the period were:

**Bengal:** Hindu Patriot, Amrita Bazar Patrika, Indian



Mirror, Bengalee, Som Prakash and Sanjivani in Bengal;

**Bombay:** Rast Goftar, Native Opinion, Indu Prakash, Mahratta, and Kesari in Bombay;

**Madras:** The Hindu, Swadesamitran, Andhra Prakasika and Kerala Patrika in Madras;

**United Province:** Advocate, Hindustan, and Azad in U. P.

**Punjab:** The Tribune, Akhbar-i-Am, and Koh-i-Noor in the Punjab.

The introduction of a modern system of education **provided opportunities for assimilation of modern western ideas**. This, in turn, gave a new direction to Indian political thinking. A large number of educated Indians imbibed a **modern rational, secular, democratic, and nationalist political outlook**. They also began to study, admire, and emulate the contemporary nationalist movements of European nations.

- By becoming modern in their thinking, the **educated Indians also acquired the ability to study the evil effects of foreign rule**. They were inspired by the dream of a modern, strong, prosperous, and united India. These educated Indians were the first to feel the humiliation of foreign subjection.

### ROLE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The English language helped nationalist leaders from **different linguistic regions to communicate with each other**. Those among the educated who took up liberal professions (lawyers, doctors, etc.) often visited England for higher education. There they saw the working of modern political institutions in a free country and **compared that system with the Indian situation** where even basic rights were denied to the citizens.

### ROLE OF PRESS AND LITERATURE

Press was the chief instrument through which the educated Indians spread the message of

patriotism and modern economic, social and political ideas. **It was the press that created an all-India consciousness**. Large numbers of nationalist newspapers made their appearance during the second half of the 19th century. In their columns, the official policies of the British were constantly criticized. Through the press, people were asked to unite and work for national welfare. The ideas of self-government, democracy, industrialisation, etc. were promoted through the press. The press also enabled nationalist workers living in different parts of the country to exchange views with one another.

### REDISCOVERY OF INDIA'S PAST

The historical researches by European scholars, such as **Max Mueller, Monier Williams, Roth and Sassoon**, and by Indian scholars such as **R.G. Bhandarkar, R.L. Mitra and later Swami Vivekananda**, created an entirely new picture of India's past. This picture was characterized by well-developed political, economic and social institutions, a flourishing trade with the outside world, a rich heritage in arts and culture and numerous cities. The theory put forward by European scholars, that the Indo-Aryans belonged to the same ethnic group from which other nations of Europe had evolved, gave a psychological boost to the educated Indians.

### SOCIO-RELIGIOUS REFORM MOVEMENTS

These **reform movements sought to eliminate social ills** that divided Indian society. It also had the effect of **bringing different sections of Indian society together** and proved to be an important factor in the growth of Indian nationalism.

### RISE OF MIDDLE-CLASS INTELLIGENTSIA

British administrative and economic innovations gave rise to a new urban middle class in towns. This class rose to prominence as a result of its education, new position, and close ties with the ruling class. This class provided leadership to the Indian National Congress at all stages of its development.



## GLOBAL IMPACT OF CONTEMPORARY MOVEMENTS

The rise of a number of nations in South America on the ruins of the Spanish and Portuguese empires, as well as the national liberation movements of Greece and Italy in general, and Ireland in particular, profoundly influenced the Indian nationalist.

## REACTIONARY POLICIES AND RACIAL ARROGANCE OF RULERS

The British sought to perpetuate racial myths of white superiority through a deliberate policy of discrimination and segregation. This caused great distress among Indians. Lytton's reactionary policies, such as lowering the maximum age limit for the I.C.S. examination from 21 to 19 years (1876), holding the grand Delhi Durbar in 1877 while the country was in the grip of famine, passing the Vernacular Press Act (1878), and passing the Arms Act (1878), sparked outrage in the country. Then there was the Ilbert Bill controversy.

### Prominent nationalist writers of the period

**Bankim Chandra Chatterjee** and Rabindranath Tagore in Bengali.

Lakshminath Bezbarua in Assamese.

Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar in Marathi.

**Subramanya Bharati** in Tamil.

Bharatendu Harishchandra in Hindi.

Altaf Husain Hali in Urdu.

Through this bill, Ripon's government sought to end "judicial disqualification based on race distinctions" and to give Indian covenant civil servants the same powers and rights as their European colleagues. Because of the European community's strong opposition, Ripon was forced to modify the bill, effectively defeating its original purpose. It became clear to the nationalists that when the interests of the European community were at stake, justice and fair play could not be expected.

### Ilbert Bill

In 1883, the controversial 'Ilbert Bill' incident took place. This bill provided that a British or European could be tried by an Indian judge. Earlier an Indian judge was not allowed to try cases in which the convict was a British or European. The bill raised a great outcry within the European community. As a result, it was amended.

The organized agitation by Europeans to repeal the Ilbert Bill, on the other hand, taught nationalists how to agitate for specific rights and demands.

## POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS BEFORE THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The Indian National Congress was not India's first political organization. However, wealthy and aristocratic elements dominated most political associations in the early half of the nineteenth century. They had a local or regional character to them. **Most of them demanded administrative reforms, Indian association with the administration, and the spread of education** in lengthy petitions to the British Parliament.

**Political organisations** in the second half of the nineteenth century were **dominated by the educated middle class—lawyers, journalists, doctors, teachers**, and so on—who had a broader perspective and a larger agenda.

### POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS IN BENGAL

**Bangabhasha Prakasika Sabha:** It was founded in 1836 by Raja Rammohan Roy's associates and was the **first organized political association that was formed in India**. It worked towards the reform of administrative association of Indians with the British, spread of education, pushing forward Indian demands to the British parliament. This organization worked towards the promotion of vernacular literature of Bengal.



**Zamindari Association:** The Zamindari Association, is also known as the '**Landholders' Society**,' was established to protect the landlords' interests. It was founded by **Dwarkanath Tagore, Prasanna Kumar Tagore and Radha Kanta Deb**. It marked the beginning of organised political activity and the use of constitutional agitation methods for the redressal of grievances. Due to its efforts, it was able to secure various concessions from the British, for example allowing tax exemption status to temples and lands for Brahmans.

**Bengal British India Society:** It was established in 1843 with the combined efforts of George Thompson along with Dwarkanath Tagore, Chandra Mohan Chatterjee and Parmananda Maitra. It primarily represented the aristocratic class. Its main goals were to collect and disseminate information about people's health and well-being.

**British Indian Association:** It was established in 1851 through the **merger of Landholders' Society and the Bengal British India Society**. Raja Radhakant Dev and Debendranath Tagore acted as its President and Secretary respectively. It petitioned the British Parliament to include some of its suggestions in the Company's renewed charter, such as:

- Establishment of a separate popular legislature;
- Separation of executive and judicial powers;
- Salary cuts for senior officers; and
- Elimination of salt and stamp duties.

**The Indian League:** It was started in 1875 by Sisir Kumar Ghosh. Its objective was to stimulate the sense of nationalism amongst the people and encourage political education.

**The Indian Association of Calcutta** (also known as the **Indian National Association**): It was founded in 1876 by **Surendranath Banerjee and Ananda Mohan Bose**. It aimed to promote the political, intellectual and material advancement of the people by legitimate means. It set out to unify Indian people in a common political programme and protested against the reduction of the age limit in 1877 for candidates of the Indian Civil Service

examination. It demanded simultaneous holding of civil service examinations in England and India and Indianisation of higher administrative posts and led a campaign against the repressive arms act and the vernacular press act. Branches of the association were opened in other towns and cities of Bengal and even outside Bengal. Its membership fee was kept low in order to attract the poorer sections to the association. It later merged with the Indian National Congress in 1886.

## **POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS IN BOMBAY**

**The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha:** It was founded in 1870, in Poona by Mahadeo Govind Ranade. The other key members who helped in its formation were **Bhawanrao Shrinivasrao Pant Pratinidhi, Ganesh Vasudeo Joshi and S H Chiplunkar**. Its objective was to serve as a bridge between the government and the people. It resented peasant interests to the government, as well as opposition to forest laws, salt laws, and press laws. It published a quarterly journal under the leadership of Ranade. The journal became the intellectual guide of new India particularly on economic questions.

### **Deccan Association and Poona Association**

In 1850, the Deccan Association was founded and in 1867, the Poona Association was founded. Both failed within a few years, and the western educated residents of Poona saw the need for a modern socio-political organization.

**The Bombay Presidency Association:** It was founded in 1885 by **Pherozeshah Mehta, K.T. Telang, and Badurddin Tyabji**.

- The Bombay Presidency Association, the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, the Madras Mahajana Sabha, and the Indian Association of Calcutta sent a joint deputation to England in September 1885 to present India's case to the British electorate.
- The first Congress was hosted three months later by the Bombay Presidency Association.



## POLITICAL ASSOCIATION IN MADRAS

**Madras Mahajan Sabha:** It was founded in 1884 by **M. Viraraghavachari, B. Subramaniya Aiyer and P. Anandacharlu**. Its objective was to establish an organization at the All India level to relieve and free the nation from the clutches of British rule and to solve Indian problems. Its members met on a regular basis, debated public issues in closed sessions, held town hall meetings, and communicated their views to the government. Its demands included simultaneous civil service examinations in England and India, the abolition of the Council of India in London, tax cuts, and cuts in civil and military spending.

## POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS IN LONDON

**East India Association:** It was organised in 1886 by **Dadabhai Naoroji in London**. Its objective was to discuss Indian questions in London and to influence British public men to promote Indian welfare. Later, Dadabhai organised the branches of the association in Indian cities.

## THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (INC)

### FOUNDATION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

One of the world's largest and oldest political parties of its kind, the Indian National Congress was formed on December 28, 1885, by British civil servant Allan Octavian Hume. In its initial days, the party was not formed to demand independence from British rule. It was rather set up to bring together a group of educated individuals on a common platform to influence policy making.

#### **Objectives at the time of formation**

To obtain a **greater participation for educated Indians** in the government and to **create a forum** where political dialogues among educated Indians and the British Raj could be arranged.

#### **First meeting of the Indian National Congress**

The first meeting of the Congress was scheduled to take place at Poona (now Pune) but later on

the event was shifted to Bombay due to a cholera outbreak. Hume had to get the approval of the then **Viceroy Lord Duffrin** to hold the meeting.

**First President of the Indian National Congress:** **Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee** also known as Umesh Chandra Banerjee presided over the first meeting of the Congress that included 72 other delegates.

- Some of the great presidents of the Congress during this early phase were **Dadabhai Naoroji, Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozeshah Mehta, P. Anandacharlu, Surendranath Banerjee, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Ananda Mohan Bose, and Gopal Krishna Gokhale.**

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

**Nation building:** The first and foremost major objective of INC was to promote the nation-building process in India. It wanted to create a national identity of being an Indian among the people and to promote National Unity. This was important because colonial administrators did not consider India as a nation, but just a geographical expression.

**To provide for an all India political platform:** It was to allow political workers from all over the country to educate and mobilize masses under a common all India political organization.

**To promote political consciousness and political awakening** among the educated citizens and then to all the sections of the society.

**To create a common Pan-India political leadership** (or the headquarters of the movement). A national leadership was the 'sine qua non' for the success of the national movement.

**To promote political liberal democracy and democratic culture** in the country. The working structure of Congress sessions was democratic through debates, discussions, and voting.

**To create and promote anti-colonial ideology** among the people. This was essential for the success of the national movement against the authoritarian and colonial government.

**To prepare and put forward the popular demand** of Indian national congress before the government.



This was to ensure the public welfare and also to unify them over these issues.

### Safety Valve Theory

- There is a theory that Hume formed the Congress with the idea that it would prove to be a 'safety valve' for releasing the growing discontent of the Indians. To this end, he convinced Lord Dufferin not to obstruct the formation of the Congress.
- The extremist leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai believed in the 'safety valve' theory. Even the Marxist historian's 'conspiracy theory' was an offspring of the 'safety valve' notion.
- The safety valve theory is, however, a small part of the truth. This theory has been discarded now. Modern Indian historians dispute the idea of 'safety valve'. In their opinion the Indian National Congress represented the urge of the politically conscious Indians to set up a national body to express the political and economic demands of the Indians.
- Historian Bipan Chandra observes early Congress leaders used Hume as a catalyst to bring together the nationalistic forces.

protest and revolt. A feeling of discontent was developing in the country and the founding of Indian National Congress in 1885 provided an outlet to it.

- **Source of unified leadership:** The protest movements lacked organization and Congress provided it with unified leadership and soon it became the spearhead of nationalist movement.
- **A cementing political factor:** It was the only cementing political factor which unified people from different parts of the country and set a common objective before them.
- **Representative of the people of India:** It gave representation to the people of different parts of India belonging to different walks of life. The National Congress attempted to fulfill their hope and aspirations.
- **Largest and most prominent Indian public organization:** From its foundation on 28 December 1885 until the time of independence of India on August 15, 1947, the Indian National Congress was the largest and most prominent Indian public organization, and central and defining influence of the Indian Independence Movement.

### IMPORTANCE OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

- **Created political consciousness:** The birth of Indian National Congress marked an important historical event in the growth of political consciousness and popular resistance in the country.
- **A platform to express discontent of the masses:** At first, there was only a movement of

### PHASES OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT

The National Movement during 1885-1947 can be divided into the following three phases on the basis of period, leadership, goals, methods adopted and social base.

Phase	Period	Leadership	Goal	Methods adopted	Social Base
Moderate Phase	1885-1905	Moderates/ Early Nationalists	Dominion Status	Constitutional Methods-Petitions, Prayers, Plead	Educated Urban Upper Classes
Extremist/Militant Nationalist Phase	1905-1920	Extremists/ Militant Nationalists	Swaraj/Self- Government	Passive Resistance & Swadeshi	All Urban Classes



Phase	Period	Leadership	Goal	Methods adopted	Social Base
Gandhian Phase	1920-1947	Mahatma Gandhi	Sampurna Swaraj/ Complete Independence	Satyagraha	All Urban and Rural Classes (including grass-root level population and masses)

## THE PHASE OF THE MODERATES (1885-1905)

The era after 1858 witnessed a growing distance between the relations of the educated Indians and the British Indian administration. This occurred because the educated Indians started understanding the nature of British rule and its consequences for the Indians. They became more and more critical of British policies in India. Their discontent gradually found expression in political activity and gave rise to political leaders like **Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozshah Mehta, D.E. Wacha, W.C. Bonnerjee and S.N. Banerjee**. They also dominated the policies of congress from 1885-1905. They were termed as 'Moderates' as they believed in moderate politics and liberalism.

### MODERATE APPROACH

Moderates believed that Britishers wanted to help Indians and help promote growth and development. They believed that it was just that they were not aware of the actual agony they were facing. According to the moderates the best way to be heard was making resolutions, doing meetings and presenting petitions in front of the government. They believed in the method of '**prayer and petition**'. The moderates' approach was based on two methods:

- **Creating a strong public opinion in national spirit** among the masses and then educating and uniting them on common political grounds;
- **They believed in persuading the British Government to introduce reforms** in India on the grounds put forward by the nationalists.

## CONTRIBUTIONS OF MODERATE NATIONALISTS

**Critique of British Colonialism:** The early nationalists, led by Dadabhai Naoroji, R.C. Dutt, Dinshaw Wacha and others deeply analyzed the political economy of British rule in India, and put forward the "drain theory" to explain British exploitation of India. They opposed the transformation of a basically self-sufficient Indian economy into a colonial economy i.e.,

- A supplier of raw materials and food stuff,
- An importer of finished goods and
- A field of investment for British capital.

The Moderates were able to create an all-India public opinion that British rule in India was the major cause of India's poverty and economic backwardness.

**Demands of Moderates:** The moderates demanded to end the export of Indian raw materials and stop importing from England. They tried persuading Britishers to develop the Indian economy by establishing Indian enterprises. Their demands included-

- reduction in land revenue,
- abolition of salt tax,
- improvement in working conditions of plantation labour,
- reduction in military expenditure, and
- encouragement to modern industry through tariff protection and direct government aid.

The vision of the moderates was long term. Their aim was to have a democratic self-government.

**Constitutional Reforms and propaganda in Legislature:** There were a total 45 representatives of India in the council. Syed Ahmad Khan, K.L. Nulkar, Kristodas Pal, V.N. Mandlik and Rashbehari



Ghosh were among the few political leaders who put forward the demand of constitutional reforms in the Imperial legislative council. The other Indian representatives present were loyal to the British government and never spoke up in support of the reforms. From 1885-1892 the demand of nationalist constituted around two constitutional reforms:

- **Expansion of the council:** Increasing the number of seats for Indians in the council.
- **Reforms in the council:** Giving Indians more power in the council, especially the greater control of finances.

**Post 1892:** In 1892 the Indian Councils Act came into existence. The moderates were not happy with the reforms introduced, so the scope of constitutional demands widened. The new demands which rose after the 1892 Acts were:

- **A majority of elected Indians in the council**
- **Control over the budget** (It demanded the power to vote upon and amend the budget.)
- Dadabhai Naroji, Gopal krishna Gokhale and Lokmanya Tilak **demand self government on the lines of other self-governing colonies** like Canada and Australia.

New slogan was given which states 'No taxation without representation'.

### Campaign for general administrative reforms

- **Better treatment to Indian Labour abroad:** Moderates demanded that better treatment should be given to labours working in British colonies, as they were facing racial discrimination and oppression.
- **Condemning the Foreign Policy of war:** Moderates condemned the frequent wars (annexation of Burma, Suppression of tribals in North west, and attack on Afghanistan) the British government was getting into, as it was decreasing the Indian revenues.
- **Demand for increasing welfare expenditure:** Moderates demanded the British government to increase expenditure on Health, Education,

Agricultural Practices, Irrigation purposes and Sanitation.

- **Separation of Judiciary and executive:** Moderates demanded in separating the functioning of both organs of the government.
- **Representation of Indians in Bureaucracy:** Moderates believed that more Indians should be represented in civil services of India, as the salaries and pensions going to British servants were draining outside the country. They also believed that the Indian civil servants would better understand masses. They believed that keeping Indians away from bureaucracy was a way of racial discrimination with Indians.

**Protection of Civil Rights:** The moderates demanded **basic civil rights** for the Indians. They **demand freedom of thought, speech, freedom of free press and association**. With the help of everlasting campaigns nationalists were able to ignite the demand for civil rights among masses. It was because of these factors that the masses protested at the arrest of Tilak and Natu brothers.

### EVALUATION OF THE EARLY NATIONALISTS

The early nationalists did a great deal to awaken the national sentiment, even though they could not draw the masses to them. They represented the most progressive forces of the time and **created a wide national awakening of all Indians** having common interests and the need to rally around a common programme against a common enemy, and above all, the feeling of belonging to one nation. They trained people in political work and popularized modern ideas and **exposed the exploitative character of colonial rule**, thus undermining its moral foundations. Their political work was based on hard realities, and not on shallow sentiments, religion, etc. They were able to establish the basic political truth that India should be ruled in the interest of Indians. They created a solid base for a more vigorous, militant, mass-based national movement in the years that followed. However, they failed to widen their democratic base and the scope of their demands.



### **ROLE OF MASSES IN THE MODERATE PHASE**

The moderate phase of the national movement had a narrow social base and the masses played a passive role. This was because-

- Early nationalists lacked political faith in the masses.
- they felt that there were numerous divisions and subdivisions in Indian society.
- In their opinion the masses were generally ignorant and had conservative ideas and thoughts.
- The moderates felt that these heterogeneous elements had first to be welded into a nation before they entered the political sphere.

But they failed to realize that it was only during a freedom struggle and with political participation that these diverse elements could come together. Because of the lack of mass participation, the Moderates could not take militant political positions against the authorities. The later nationalists differed from the Moderates precisely on this point.

### **ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT**

The British Indian Government was hostile to the Congress from the beginning despite the latter's

moderate methods and emphasis on loyalty to the British Crown.

**Cold attitude:** The official attitude stiffened further after 1887 when the government failed to persuade the Congress to confine itself to social issues when the Congress was becoming increasingly critical of colonial rule.

**Open condemnation:** The government resorted to open condemnation of the Congress, calling the nationalists "seditious brahmins", "disloyal babus", etc. Dufferin called the Congress "a factory of sedition".

**Use of divide and rule policy:** Late,, the government adopted a 'divide and rule' policy towards the Congress. The officials encouraged reactionary elements like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Raja Shiv Prasad Singh of Benaras to organise the United Indian Patriotic Association to counter Congress propaganda.

**Pitted the Moderates against the Extremists:** The government also tried to divide the nationalists on the basis of religion, and, through a policy of 'carrot and stick', pitted the Moderates against the Extremists.



The Indian national movement even in its early days had increasingly made a large number of people conscious of the evils of foreign domination and of the need for fostering patriotism. It had imparted the necessary political training to the educated Indians. It had, in fact, changed the temper of the people and created a new life in the country. By the end of the 19th century, the Indian nationalist had grown in self-respect and self-confidence. They had acquired the capacity to govern themselves and in the future development of their country. Leaders like Tilak, Aurobindo Ghose and Bipin Chandra Pal preached the message of self-respect and asked the nationalists to rely on the character and capacities of the Indian people.

## **PHASE OF MILITANT NATIONALISM**

### **EXISTENCE OF MILITANT NATIONALIST SCHOOL OF THOUGHT**

From the beginning of the national movement, a school of militant nationalism existed in the country. This school of thought was represented by leaders like Rajnarain Bose and Ashwini Kumar Dutt in Bengal and Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar in Maharashtra. The exceptional personality of this school was Bal Gangadhar Tilak, later popularly known as Lokmanya Tilak. Bal Ganga-dhar Tilak set a new example of boldness and sacrifice when the authorities arrested Tilak in 1897 on the charge of spreading hatred and disaffection against the government. He refused to apologize to the government and was sentenced to 18 months' rigorous imprisonment. Thus, he became a living symbol of the new national spirit of self-sacrifice.

Lokmanya Tilak published two newspapers 'the Maratha' which was in English and the other 'Kesari' which was in Marathi.

### **Leadership**

At the dawn of the 20th century, the school of militant nationalist found a favorable political

climate and its adherents came forward to lead the second stage of the national movement. The most outstanding leaders of militant nationalism, apart from Tilak were Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghose and Lala Lajpat Rai. The distinctive political aspects of the program of the militant nationalists were that they believed that they themselves must work out their own preservation and make the effort to recover from their degraded position. They declared that great sacrifices and suffering were needed for this task.

By 1905, India possessed a large number of leaders who had acquired during the previous period valuable experience in the conduct of political unrest and in the conduct of political struggles. Without a group made up of political operators, it would have been difficult to bring the national movement to a higher political stage.

### **GROWTH OF MILITANT NATIONALISM**

There was a spark of militant nationalist ideology which was emerging in the late 1890s. Slowly and gradually with circumstances it took a concrete shape by 1905. The leadership of the Anti-Partition Movement soon passed to militant nationalist like Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose.

### **Reasons Behind the Growth of Militant Nationalism**

- **Lack of solid results with moderate methodology:** There was a dissatisfaction which was seen among certain members of Congress, especially the younger ones regarding ideology and methods used by moderates. Moderates had a policy of peaceful and constitutional agitation, of which the younger generation was critical. The famous 'political mendicancy' of 3 Ps which were Prayer, Petition and Protests, found to be ineffective in serving the purpose of Congress.
- **Administration of Lord Curzon:** The administration of Lord Curzon proved to be the proverbial last nail in the coffin. In his term of



office, he inflicted upon the country in almost breathless succession one contentious measure after another to which the people took the strongest exception. His costly Durbars amidst divesting famines, his Indian Universities Act of 1904, his attack on the elected members of the Calcutta Corporation, his expanding to Tibet at the cost of Indian revenue sent a wave of indignation throughout the length and breadth of the country.

- **Impact of Westernization:** With colonial rule, westernization assimilated in society. In reaction to the spread of westernization, various leaders emerged who realized the loss of Indian culture and national identity which was submerging into the colonial pattern. During that time, developments took place in an intellectual and moral dimension where a number of leaders like B D Chatterjee, Swami Vivekananda, Dayanand Saraswati etc. emerged who portrayed the brighter side of Indian culture and traditional past. Such ideology removed the myth of western superiority.
- **Emergence of trained leadership:** The untapped energy of masses was channelized by the experienced leaders on the right track. The partition of Bengal was an opportunity to release the energy of masses through a proper, planned and channelized agitation. **This resulted in the Swadeshi Movement.**
- **Impact of International events:** While Indians were struggling with colonial empire, there were countries which were on the path of development. Various events took place during this period,
  - ♦ Japan- became industrial power and defeated Russia in Russo-Japanese war in 1905
  - ♦ Ethiopia- defeated Italy (another European country)
  - ♦ Boer war- Europeans again suffered defeat.

Such events broke the myth of western superiority and its invincibility. Along with such events, various nationalist movements in Turkey, Egypt, China etc. made Indians more confident and gave them a ray of hope to stand against western power.

- **Growth of Education:** By the close of the 19th century, the number of educated Indians had increased. Large numbers of them worked in the administration on extremely low salaries, while many others increasingly faced unemployment. Their economic plight made them look critically at the nature of British rule. Many of them were attracted by radical nationalist politics. The educated Indians became the best propagators and followers of militant nationalism because they were low-paid or unemployed and because they were educated in modern thought and politics. They knew European and world history very well.
- **Existence of a Militant School of thought:** By the beginning of the twentieth century, a group of nationalist thinkers had emerged who advocated a more militant approach to political work. This militant approach was represented by leaders like Raj Narain Bose, Ashwini Kumar Dutta, Aurobindo Ghosh and Bipin Chandra Pal in Bengal; Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar and Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Maharashtra; and Lala Lajpat Rai in Punjab. Tilak emerged as the most outstanding representative of this school of thought.
- **Intentions of Britishers were recognized:** The demands of congress were not fulfilled by the British and the lack of faith developed among Indians with an idea that only Indians can better govern the country. Highly restrictive policies of British were also responsible for frustrating the aspirations of Indians.
- **Disappointment caused by various Acts:** The **political events of the years 1892 to 1905** also disappointed the nationalists and made them think of more radical politics. The nationalists



realised the fact that **instead of giving more rights to the Indians, the government was taking away even the existing ones. For Example:**

- 1897** The Natu brothers were deported without trial and Lokamanya Tilak and other newspaper editors were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for arousing the people against the foreign government.
- 1898** A law was passed making it an offence to excite "feelings of disaffection" towards the foreign government.
- 1899** The number of Indian members in Calcutta Corporation were reduced.
- 1904** Official Secrets Act curbed freedom of press.
- 1904** Indian Universities Act ensured greater government control over universities, which it described as factories producing political revolutionaries.

## THE PARTITION OF BENGAL

### Introduction

Partitioning Bengal was first considered in 1903. There were also additional proposals to separate Chittagong and the districts of Dhaka and Mymensingh from Bengal and attach them to the province of Assam. In a similar way, Chhota Nagpur was to be incorporated with the Central Provinces. The government officially published the idea in January 1904, and in February, Lord Curzon made an official tour to eastern districts of Bengal to assess public opinion on the partition. He consulted with leading personalities and delivered speeches explaining the government's stand on partition. **The idea was opposed by Henry John Stedman Cotton, Chief Commissioner of Assam (1896-1902).** On 20th July, 1905 the partition of Bengal was announced, by then Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon. The partition took effect on 16th October 1905. Partition was annulled in 1911.

Arundel Committee was appointed by then Viceroy of India, Lord Minto in 1905, to look after the question of extending the representative element in the Legislative Council of Muslims. The committee was responsible for carrying out its studies and make its observation on the same. In 1906 it submitted its report on Political reforms

The province of Bengal had an area of 189,000 square miles and a population of over 80 million. Eastern Bengal was almost isolated from the western part by geography and poor communications. In 1836, the upper provinces were placed under a Lieutenant Governor, and in 1854 the Governor-General-in-Council was relieved of the direct administration of Bengal. In 1874 Assam, including Sylhet, was served from Bengal to form a Chief-Commissionership, and the Lushai Hills were added to it in 1898. It was hard to manage a province as large as Bengal with this large population.

### OFFICIAL REASON FOR PARTITION

Partition was promoted for administrative reasons; Bengal was as large as France but with a significantly larger population. The eastern region was thought to be neglected and under-governed. By splitting the province, an improved administration could be established in the east where, subsequently, the population would benefit from new schools and employment opportunities.

### REAL MOTIVE BEHIND THE PARTITION

British Officials hoped to **stop the rising tide of nationalism in Bengal**. This was to be achieved by putting the **Bengalis under two administrations by dividing them on the basis of language and religion**.

**On the basis of language:** Reducing the Bengalis to a minority in Bengal itself (as in the new proposal Bengal was to have 17 million Bengalis and 37 million Hindi and Oriya speakers).

**On the basis of religion:** Bengali Hindus were in the forefront of political agitation for greater participation in governance; their position would



be weakened, since Muslims would now dominate in the East. Hindus tended to oppose the partition, which was more popular among Muslims. (As the western half was to be a Hindu majority area (42 million out of a total 54 million) and the eastern half was to be a Muslim majority area (18 million out of a total of 31 million).)

**Appeasing Muslim community:** Viceroy argued that Dacca to become the capital of the new Muslim majority province. It would provide Muslims with a unity not experienced by them since the days of old Muslim viceroys and kings.

**Proposed demarcation:** The new province would consist of the state of Tripura, the Divisions of Chittagong, Dhaka and Rajshahi (excluding Darjeeling) and the district of Malda incorporated with Assam province. Bengal was to surrender not only these large eastern territories but also to cede to the Central provinces the five Hindi-speaking regions. On the western front it was offered Sambalpur and five minor Oriya-speaking regions from the Central provinces. Bengal would be left with an area of 141,580 square miles and population of 54 million, of which 42 million would be Hindus and 9 million Muslims.

### Views of Risley on Bengal

Risley, Home Secretary to the Government of India, wrote in an official note on 6 December 1904:

"Bengal united is a power. Bengal divided will pull in several different ways. That is what the Congress leaders feel: their apprehensions are perfectly correct and they form one of the great merits of the scheme.... One of our main objective is to split up and thereby to weaken a solid body of opponents to our rule".

The new province was named Eastern Bengal and Assam with Dhaka as its capital and subsidiary headquarters at Chittagong. Its area would be 106,540 square miles with a population of 31 million, where 18 million would be Muslims and 12 million Hindus. Administration would consist of

a Legislative Council, a Board of Revenue of two members, and the jurisdiction of the Calcutta High Court would be left undisturbed. The government pointed out that Eastern Bengal and Assam would have a clearly demarcated western boundary and well defined geographical, ethnological, linguistic and social characteristics. The government of India promulgated their final decision in a resolution dated July 19, 1905 and the partition of Bengal was affected on October 16 of the same year.

### THE ANTI-PARTITION MOVEMENT

The Indian National Congress' opposition to the Partition was led by **Sir Henry John Stedman Cotton** who had been Chief Commissioner of Assam, but Curzon was not moved. Later, Cotton, Liberal MP for Nottingham east coordinated the successful campaign to oust the first Lieutenant-Governor of East Bengal, Sir Bampfylde Fuller. The Anti partition movement was the work of the entire national leaders of Bengal and not of any one section of the movement. Its most prominent leaders at the initial stage were moderated leaders like **Surendra Nath Banerjee and Krishna Kumar Mitra**. Militant and revolutionary nationalist co-operated with one another during the course of the movement. The Anti-Partition Movement was initiated on 7 August 1905. On the day a massive demonstration against the partition was organized in the Town hall in Calcutta. From this meeting delegates dispersed to spread the movement to the rest of the province.

### EFFECT OF PARTITION ON PEOPLE

Rabindranath Tagore composed the national song, 'Amar Sonar Bangla', for the occasion which was sung by huge crowds parading the streets. This song was adopted as its national anthem by Bangladesh in 1971 after Liberation.

The partition took effect on 16 October, 1905, and leaders of the protest movement declared it to be a day of national mourning throughout Bengal. It was observed as a day of fasting. There was a Hartal in Calcutta. People walked barefooted and bathed



in the Ganga in the morning hours. The street of Calcutta was full of the cries of 'Vande Mataram' which overnight became the national song of Bengal and which was soon to become the theme song of the national movement. The ceremony of Raksha Bandhan was utilized in a new way. Hindus and Muslim tied the rakhi on one another's wrists as a symbol of the unbreakable unity of the Bengalis and of the two halves of Bengal. In the afternoon, there was a great demonstration when the veteran leader Ananda Mohan Bose laid the groundwork for a Federation Hall to celebrate the indestructible unity of Bengal. He addressed the crowd of over 50,000 people.

### ANTI-PARTITION CAMPAIGN

There was widespread political unrest in the province after the announcement of partition. Many Bengalis saw the partition as an insult to their motherland. There was a huge outpouring of support for Bengal's unity.

#### **Campaign Under Moderates**

Leaders like **Surendranath Banerjee, K.K. Mitra and Prithwishchandra Ray** used methods like petitions to the government, public meetings, memoranda, and propaganda through pamphlets and newspapers such as **Hitabadi, Sanjibani and Bengalee**. Their objective was to exert **sufficient pressure on the government through an educated public opinion** in India and England to prevent the unjust partition of Bengal from being implemented.

**Campaign:** moderates **organized protest meetings in small towns all over Bengal.**

- **Boycott resolution:** It was in these meetings that the pledge to boycott foreign goods was first taken.
- **Proclamation of Swadeshi Movement:** With the passage of the Boycott Resolution in the Calcutta Townhall, the formal proclamation of the Swadeshi Movement was made.
- **Bathing in Ganga:** On October 16, 1905, the day the partition formally came into force, was

observed as a day of mourning throughout Bengal. People **fasted, bathed in the Ganga and walked barefooted in processions singing Bande Mataram.**

- **'Amar Sonar Bangla':** The national anthem of present-day Bangladesh, was **composed by Rabindranath Tagore**, and was sung by huge crowds marching in the streets.
- People **tied rakhis on each other's hands** as a symbol of unity of the two halves of Bengal.
- **Surendranath Banerjee and Ananda Mohan Bose** addressed huge gatherings.

#### **Campaign under Extremists' leadership**

The extremists leaders felt that mere demonstrations, public meetings and resolutions were not likely to have much effect on the rulers. More positive actions that would reveal the intensity of popular feelings and exhibit them at their best was needed. The answer was Swadeshi and Boycott. **Mass meetings** were held all over Bengal where Swadeshi or the use of Indian goods and the boycott of British goods were proclaimed and pledged. In many places the public burning of foreign cloth was organized and shops selling foreign cloth were picketed. The Swadeshi Movement was a huge success

According to Surendranath Banerjee; Swadeshim during the days of its potency colored the entire texture of our social and domestic life. Marriage presents that included foreign goods, the like of which could be manufactured at home, were returned. Priests would often decline to officiate at ceremonies where foreign articles were offered as oblations to the gods. Guests would refuse to participate in festivities where foreign salt or foreign sugar was used.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF SWADESHI MOVEMENT

**Emphasis given to Self-Reliance:** An important aspect of the Swadeshi movement was its emphasis



on self-reliance or Atmashakti. Self-sufficiency meant the assertion of national dignity, honor and self-confidence.

**Swadeshi or Indigenous Enterprises:** In the economic field, it was a question of promoting local industries and other enterprises. Many textile mills, soap and match factories, handloom-weaving enterprises, national banks and insurance companies were started. Acharya P.C Ray organized his famous Bengal Chemical Swadeshi Stores. Rabindra Nath Tagore helped to open a Swadeshi store. V.O. Chidambaram Pillai's Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company, at Tuticorin, gave a challenge to the British India Steam Navigation Company.

**Inspiration from Cultural Sphere:** The Swadeshi Movement had several consequences in the realm of culture. There was a flowering of nationalist poetry, prose and journalism. The patriotic songs written at the time by poets like Rabindranath Tagore, Rajni Kant Sen, Syed Abu Mohammed and Munkuda Das are sung in Bengal to this day.

**Programme of Swadeshi or National Education:** Another self-sufficient and constructive activity undertaken at the time was that of national education. National Education institutions where literary, technical or physical education was imparted were opened by nationalists who regarded the existing system of education as de-nationalising and, in any case, inadequate. On 15 August 1906, a National Council of Education was set up. A National College with Aurobindo Ghose as Principal was started in Calcutta.

**Boycott of Foreign Goods:** This included **boycott and public burning of foreign cloth, boycott of foreign-made salt or sugar**, refusal by priests to ritualize marriages involving exchange of foreign goods, and refusal by washermen to wash foreign clothes.

**Public Meetings and Processions:** These emerged as major methods of mass mobilization. Simultaneously they were forms of popular expression.

**Corps of Volunteers or 'Samitis':** Samitis such as the **Swadesh Bandhab Samiti** of **Ashwini Kumar Dutta (in Barisal)** emerged as a very popular and powerful means of mass mobilization. In **Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu**, **V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, Subramania Siva** and some lawyers formed the **Swadeshi Sangam** which inspired the local masses. These **samitis generated political consciousness among the masses** through magic lantern lectures, swadeshi songs, providing physical and moral training to their members, social work during famines and epidemics, organization of schools, training in swadeshi crafts, and arbitration courts.

**Use of Festivals and Melas:** The idea was to use traditional festivals and occasions as a means of reaching out to the masses and spreading political messages. For instance, **Tilak's Ganapati and Shivaji festivals** became a medium of swadeshi propaganda not only in western India but also in Bengal. In Bengal, the traditional folk theatre forms were used for this purpose.

#### **Why Extremists acquired a dominant influence over the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal?**

After 1905, the Extremists acquired a dominant influence over the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal due to the following reasons:

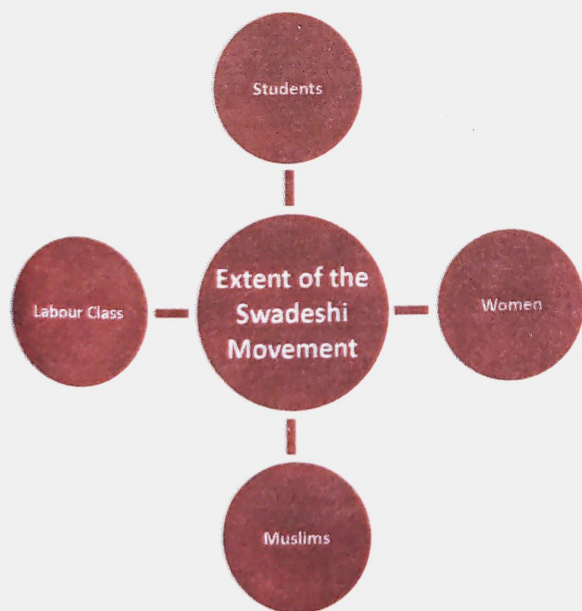
- The Moderate-led movement had failed to yield results.
- The divisive tactics of the governments of both the Bengals had embittered the nationalists.
- The government had resorted to suppressive measures, which included atrocities on students—many of whom were given corporal punishment; ban on public singing of Vande Mataram; restriction on public meetings; prosecution and long imprisonment of swadeshi workers; clashes between the police and the people in many towns; arrests and deportation of leaders; and suppression of freedom of the press.



## EXTENT OF SWADESHI MOVEMENT

### Role of Students

A leading role in the Swadeshi agitation was played by the Students of Bengal. They practiced and propagated swadeshi and took the initiative to organize pickets in shops selling foreign fabrics. The government did everything to repress the students. Orders were issued to penalize those schools and colleges whose students took an active part in the Swadeshi agitation; their grants-in-aid and other privileges were to be withdrawn, they were to be disaffiliated, their students were not to be permitted to compete for scholarships and were to be barred from all service under the government. Disciplinary action was taken against students found guilty of participating in the nationalist agitation. Many of them were fined, expelled from schools and colleges, arrested and sometimes beaten down by the police with lathis. The students, however, refused to be intimidated.



### Women

A prominent aspect of the Swadeshi agitation was the active participation of women in the movement. The traditionally home-centered

women of the urban middle class joined processions and picketing. From then on, they were to take an active part in the nationalist movement.

### Muslims

Many prominent Muslims joined the Swadeshi Movement including Abdul Rasul, the famous barrister; Liaquat Hussain, the popular agitator; and Guznavi, the businessman. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad joined one of the revolutionary terrorist groups. Many other middle- and upper-class Muslims, however, remained neutral or, led by the Nawab of Dhaka supported partition as well. In this communal attitude, the Nawab of Dhaka and others were encouraged by the officials. In a speech at Dhaka, Lord Curzon declared that one of the reasons for the partition was "to invest" the Mohammedans in Eastern Bengal with a unity which they have not enjoyed since the days of the old Mussalman Viceroys and Kings".

### Working Class

An attempt was also made to give political expression to **economic grievances of the working class by organising strikes**. In the beginning, **some strikes were organised on the issue of rising prices and racial insult**, primarily in the foreign-owned companies. In September 1905, **more than 250 Bengali clerks of the Burn Company, Howrah, walked out in protest against a derogatory work regulation**. In July 1906, a strike of workers in the East Indian Railway resulted in the formation of a Railwaymen's Union. **Subramania Siva and Chidambaram Pillai led strikes** in Tuticorin and Tirunelveli in a foreign-owned cotton mill. In **Rawalpindi (Punjab)**, the arsenal and railway workers went on strike led by **Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh**. The labour unrests subsided under strict action by summer of 1908.

### All-India Aspect of The Movement

The cry of Swadeshi and Swaraj was soon taken up by other provinces of India. Movements in support of Bengal's unity and boycott of foreign goods were organized in Bombay, Madras and northern India. The leading role in spreading the



Swadeshi Movement to the rest of the country was played by Tilak. Tilak quickly saw that with the inauguration of this movement in Bengal, a new phase of Indian nationalism had opened.

### Leaders Beyond Bengal:

Area	Leader
Punjab	Lala Lajpatrai and Ajit Singh
Delhi	Sayyed Haider Raza
Madras	Chidambaram Pillai
Bombay	Bal Gangadhar Tilak
Andhra Pradesh	Hari Sarvottam Rao

### Swadeshi Campaign in Tamil Nadu

The Swadeshi movement in Tamil Nadu, notably in Tirunelveli district, generated a lot of attention and support. There was a deep divide in the Tamil Nadu congress between the moderates and the extremists.

- **Development of Vernacular Oratory:** Initially, the movement was more of a reaction to the partition of Bengal and regular meetings were held to protest the partition. The speakers, in such meetings, spoke mostly in the **vernacular language** to an audience that included students, lawyers, and labourers at that time. The **shift from English oratory to vernacular oratory** was a significant development of this time, which had a huge impact on the mass politics in Tamil Nadu.
- **V.O. Chidambaram and Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company (SSNC):** The Swadeshi movement in Tamil Nadu came to national attention in 1906 when V.O. Chidambaram mooted the idea of launching a swadeshi shipping venture in opposition to the monopoly of the British in navigation through the coast. In 1906, V.O. Chidambaram registered a joint stock company called The **Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company (SSNC)**.
- **Subramania Bharati: Poet and Nationalist:** The growth of newspapers, both in **English and**

**Tamil** language, aided the swadeshi movement in Tamil Nadu. **G. Subramaniam** was one of the first among the leaders to use newspapers to spread the nationalist message across a larger audience. **Subramaniam**, along with **five others**, founded **The Hindu (in English) and Swadesamitran** (which was the first ever Tamil daily).

Subramania Bharati became the sub-editor of Swadesamitran around the time (1904) when Indian nationalism was looking for a fresh direction. Bharati was also editing Chakravartini, a Tamil monthly devoted to the cause of Indian women. He translated into Tamil Tilak's Tenets of the New Party and a booklet on the Madras militants' trip to the Surat Congress in 1907. Bharati edited a Tamil weekly India, which became the voice of the radicals.

### Stages of Swadeshi Movement:

Timeline	Stage
1905-1909	Protest movement confined to Bengal
1909-1910	Anti-Colonial movement with a countrywide spread
1910-1911	Swadeshi movement merged with revolutionary terrorist movement leading to several secret associations.

### ANNULMENT OF PARTITION

By 1908, the Swadeshi Movement was almost over in an open phase due to government's violent repression. The movement failed to create an effective organisation. It was rendered leaderless as most of the leaders were either arrested or deported by the time. Maintaining a high level of intensity of such mass movement was a difficult task in the absence of effective leaders. Also, internal conflicts and differences in ideologies among the leaders did more harm to the movement than good. The movement failed to reach the peasantry and was confined to the upper and middle classes only.



The annulment of partition of Bengal was declared in 1911 by Lord Hardinge primarily to curb the revolutionary terrorism. Bihar and Orissa were taken out of Bengal and Assam was made a separate province. The united Bengal was placed under a Governor and Assam was placed under a Chief Commissioner. The annulment was not taken well by the Muslims, consequently the British shifted the administrative capital from Calcutta to Delhi, as the place was associated with Muslim glory.

### EVALUATION OF SWADESHI MOVEMENT

Although the Swadeshi Movement came to an ebb, the movement was a first in itself in modern Indian history. It can be said that since it could not

involve masses completely, it did an improvement over the previous methods. There was participation of hitherto untouched masses- students, women, sections of rural and urban population. It employed whole different methods which ranged from peaceful petitions and prayers to incipient socialism to political Extremism and revolutionary terrorism. The movement also witnessed the involvement of arts, literature, science, culture and social reforms. This was an important experience for people who got to learn to raise their grievances through political protest, take strong political stands and participate in new political activity. The swadeshi Campaign undermined the colonial ideology and its institutions. This new experience contributed heavily to the upcoming freedom struggle.



**D**uring the Surat session in 1907, the Congress leaders split into moderate and extremist groups. Differences between these two sections became evident during the Benares session (1905) when some nationalists led by Tilak denounced the method of the moderates and suggested passive resistance. They also supported the boycott of British assets and government institutions. At the end of this session, Lokmanya Tilak and his followers held a separate conference and announced the formation of the Extremist Party. However, they decided to work as a part of the Indian National Congress.

### SURAT SPLIT (1907)

In 1906, at the **Calcutta Session** the rift between Moderates and Extremists further widened. Both the groups put their candidates for Presidentship but **Dada Bhai Naoroji was accepted as a compromise candidate by both of the groups**. The Extremists group also succeeded in getting a resolution which emphasized the principle of swadeshi, boycott and national education. But Moderates did not accept what had happened at the Calcutta session in 1906 and were determined to undo the same at the Surat Session in 1907. The extremists were also determined to see that the moderates were unable to get what they wanted.

In the Surat Session of 1907, the Extremists tried to push the candidature of Lal Lajpat Rai for Presidentship of Congress and Moderates wanted Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh to be President. **The situation**

**was saved by Lala Lajpat Rai who stepped down and Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh became the President.** The real trouble started when the moderates tried to repudiate the boycott, swadeshi and national education resolution passed in 1906. This was not acceptable to the Extremists. As a result, open clashes occurred and the session was subsequently suspended. Moderates held a separate convention from which extremists were excluded. This is known as the **Surat Split (1907)**.

The division between the Extremists and Moderates was further cemented in 1908 when the Indian National Congress at the Madras session made a change in its constitution. It provided that the Congress delegates were to be elected only by congress committee and associations affiliated to the Congress. Net result of that change was that the Extremists were excluded from the Congress. Tilak and his followers remained outside the Indian National Congress till 1915 when a compromise was reached. Significance

The Surat Split was a turning point in the history of nationalist movement in India. It meant a victory of the Extremists over the Moderates. It also **signified the change in the policy and attitude of the Government towards the nationalist movement**. The Government took resort to the policy of 'reform and repression'. Reforms were undertaken with a view to reunite the Moderates to the government side. The Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909 can be said to be the direct outcome of the 'Surat Split'.

### Important Events

**Banaras Session,  
December 1905  
(Led by Gokhale)**

- **Demand of Extremist:**
  - ♦ The **Extremists wanted to extend the Boycott and Swadeshi Movement** to regions outside Bengal.
  - ♦ Extremists wanted to include all forms of associations (such as government service, law courts, legislative councils, etc.) within the boycott programme and thus started a nationwide mass movement.
- **Demand of Moderates:**
  - ♦ **Moderates** were not in favour of extending the movement beyond Bengal.
  - ♦ They were **totally opposed to boycotts of councils and similar associations**.
  - ♦ They **advocated constitutional methods to protest against** the partition of Bengal.
- **Compromise**
  - ♦ A mild resolution condemning the partition of Bengal and the reactionary policies of Curzon and supporting the swadeshi and boycott programme in Bengal was passed.



### Important Events

Calcutta session,  
December 1906  
(Presided by  
Dadabhai Naoroji)

- **Demand of Moderates**
  - ♦ Moderates proposed the name of Dadabhai Naoroji
- **Demand of Extremists**
  - ♦ Wanted either Tilak or Lajpat Rai as the president.
- **Compromise**
  - ♦ Dadabhai Naoroji was elected as the president as a compromise candidate by both parties.
  - ♦ Four compromise resolutions on the **Swadeshi, Boycott, National Education, and Self-Government demands were passed.**
  - ♦ Self-government or swaraj was to be like the United Kingdom or the colonies of Australia or Canada.

Surat session,  
1907 (Presided by  
Dr. Rash Behari  
Ghosh)

- **Extremist Demand**
  - ♦ The Extremists wanted the 1907 session to be **held in Nagpur (Central Provinces) with Tilak or Lajpat Rai as the President.**
  - ♦ They wanted the **reiteration of the swadeshi, boycott and national education resolutions.**
- **Moderates Demand**
  - ♦ The Moderates wanted the **session at Surat** with **Rashbehari Ghosh** as the President.
  - ♦ They also wanted to **drop the resolutions on swadeshi, boycott and national education.**
- **Compromise**
  - ♦ Both sides adopted rigid positions, leaving no room for compromise.

### AFTERMATH OF SURAT SPLIT

**Attack on the Extremists:** Between 1907 and 1911, five new laws were passed by the British to **check anti-government activity.** These legislations included the Seditious Meetings Act, 1907; Indian Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act, 1908; Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908; and the Indian Press Act, 1910.

- **Tilak was tried in 1909 for sedition** for what he had written in 1908 in his Kesari about a bomb thrown by Bengal revolutionaries in Muzaffarpur, resulting in the death of two innocent European women. He was sent to Mandalay (Burma) jail for six years.
- **Aurobindo and B.C. Pal retired from active politics.**
- Lajpat Rai left for abroad. The **Extremists were not able to organise an effective alternative party to sustain the movement.**

**Changed strategy of Government:** The government with the ongoing development in Congress, followed carrot and stick policy which can be said as three-pronged approach of repression – conciliation- suppression.

- **First Stage (Repression):** Extremists to be suppressed to the extent which aimed to frighten the moderates.
- **Second Stage (Conciliation):** Compromise through concessions and hope given for forthcoming reforms if moderates keep distance from extremists.
- **Third Stage (Suppression):** with moderates on their side, the government tried to suppress the extremists.

This strategy of the British government towards moderates and extremists was not understood by both sections and therefore it was a success. It was later proved by the Surat split.



**Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909:** With the passage of time and with the rising wave of nationalism, other communities like Muslims and Sikhs were becoming politically active. In October 1906, a group of Muslim elites known as Shimla deputation met Lord Minto and demanded separate electorates for the Muslims and representation in excess of their numerical strength given the “value of contribution to the British Empire”.

The same group sought to dominate the Muslim league which was initially put forth by Nawab Salimullah of Dacca. The Muslim league intended

to preach loyalty to the empire to keep the Muslim intelligentsia away from joining congress. In this background, came the **Morley Minto reforms** named after Morley – the Secretary of State and Minto – the Viceroy of India at that time. Some of the provisions were as under:

- The distribution of seats in the Central Legislative Council was altered by these reforms. The number of elected members in Provincial Legislative Council and Central Legislative Council were increased. The new setup of Central Legislative Council was –

<b>Total Seats = 68</b>	Elected seats = 27	Nominated Seats = 5
Official Seats = 36	Separate Electorate seats for Muslims = 8	Seats for landlords = 2
Non official Seats = 32	Seats for British Capitalist = 6	Seats open for general electorate = 11

- The election of members was indirect in nature. The local bodies would elect an electoral college who would in turn elect the members for Provincial Legislature and members of Provincial Legislature would elect the members of Central legislature.
- It retained official majority in the Central legislative council, but allowed the Provincial legislative councils to have non-official majority.
- Muslims were given representation in excess to the proportion of their population as demanded by **the Shimla Deputation**.
- It introduced the system of communal representation for Muslims by accepting the concept of ‘separate electorate’. Under this, Muslims members were to be elected only by Muslim voters. Thus, the Act ‘legalized communalism’ and Lord Minto came to be known as the **Father of Communal Electorate**.
- It provided for the first time the association of Indians with the Viceroy’s executive council and Governors. **Satyendra Prasad Sinha became the first** Indian to join the Viceroy’s executive council. He was appointed as the Law member.
- It enlarged the deliberative functions of the legislative councils at both the levels. For example, members were allowed to ask supplementary questions, move resolutions on the budget and so on.
- It also provided for the separate representation of presidency corporations, chambers of commerce, universities and zamindars.

#### Evaluation of the Reforms

- Indirect elections: The Moderates and the country as a whole were disappointed by the ‘constitutional’ reforms of 1909. Most of the elected members in the legislative councils were still elected indirectly. Of the 68 members of the Imperial Legislative Council, 36 were officials, and 5 were nominated non-officials. Out of 27 elected members, 6 were elected by big landlords and 2 by British capitalists.
- No real power to the legislative council: The reformed councils still enjoyed no real power and remained mere advisory bodies. They did not introduce an element of democracy or self-government. The undemocratic, foreign and exploitative character of British rule remained unchanged.



- Encouraged Muslim communalism: The real purpose of the Morley-Minto Reforms was to divide the nationalist ranks and to check the growing unity among Indians by encouraging the growth of Muslim communalism. The reforms introduced the system of separate electorates under which Muslims could only vote for Muslim candidates in constituencies specially reserved for them. This was done to encourage the notion that the political, economic and cultural interests of Hindus and Muslims were separate and not common.

The major highlight of the reforms was that **Lord Morley made it clear that colonial self-government was not suitable for India**. This was due to resistance in the British government to introduce parliamentary and responsible government in India as per the demand raised by the Indian National Congress. The distasteful instrument of separate electorates was aimed at confusing moderates, dividing national ranks and checking the growth of unity among Indians. The system of election was too indirect and this led to improper representation. Also, the multiple stages acted like sieves which infiltrated the legislature of British loyalists. These reforms were mere illusions instead of something substantial. The people were given '**benevolent despotism**' instead of self-government.

## RISE OF REVOLUTIONARY TERRORISM

Around 1908, the decline of the militant nationalists and the rise of revolutionary activities marked an important shift from non-violent methods to violent action. It also meant a shift from mass-based action to elite response to British rule.

### FIRST PHASE (1907-1917)

The activities of revolutionary heroism started as a by-product of the growth of militant nationalism. The first phase acquired more activists due to the fallout of the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement and continued till 1917.

### Reason For Surge of Revolutionary Activities

The rise and growth of revolutionary terrorism in India from the beginning of the 20th century was due to several factors, some of the youth, particularly those of Bengal, Punjab and Maharashtra, were increasingly getting frustrated with the moderate methods and techniques of political struggle such as petitions, meetings resolutions, speeches etc.

- **Losing faith in extremists' methods:** The youth was gradually losing faith in the extremist methods of passive resistance (i.e., to refuse to cooperate with the government and to boycott government service, courts, governments schools and colleges) to achieve nationalist aims. This feeling was further strengthened by the failure of the Swadeshi and Anti-Partition Movement to get the partition of Bengal repealed. Some of the events following the partition of Bengal accentuated the revolutionary impulse of many young Indians.
- **Hatred towards Foreign Rule:** Besides, there was growing hatred among the Indian youth for foreign rule due to the racial superiority and arrogant behavior of the British. This hatred was also due to the repressive measures adopted by the British to suppress the national movement.
- **Influenced by revolutionary terrorists:** These Indian young men were also influenced by the revolutionary terrorist activities of the Irish terrorists, who were also fighting for Independence from the British, and the Russian Nihilists, who were trying to free the Russian people, from the autocratic rule of the Tsars (rulers of Russia).

Thus, the frustration among the youth caused by the failure of the political struggle (both by the extremists and moderates) to achieve national aims and by the government repression ultimately resulted in revolutionary terrorism.

### The Revolutionary Programme

The methodology of the Revolutionaries involved individual heroic actions, such as:



- **Assassinations:** Organizing assassinations of unpopular officials and of traitors and informers among the revolutionaries themselves.
- **Dacoities:** Conducting swadeshi dacoities to raise funds for revolutionary activities.
- **Military Conspiracies:** Organizing military conspiracies with the expectation of help from the enemies of Britain.

### Objective of Revolutionaries

Revolutionary terrorism was the **result of the rise of Militant nationalism in India**. When the Swadeshi and Boycott movement failed to fulfil their aim, many activist organizations came to existence. The mass, especially the younger generation, became impatient after the decline of the Swadeshi and Boycott movements. To channelize their energy, they looked for some leaders to guide them, but with the demise of the Swadeshi movement there was a scarcity of leaders. This scarcity of new leaders led to divergence towards new militant

activities. They wished to strike terror in the hearts of the rulers, arouse people, and remove the fear of authority from their minds. They wanted to inspire the people by appealing to their patriotism.

### REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES IN INDIA

#### Bengal

By 1870s, secret societies existed within Calcutta's student community, but these were not very active. Jnanendranath Basu organised the first revolutionary groups in Midnapore in 1902.

**Anushilan Samiti**, an organized revolutionary association, was established in Bengal by **Promod Mitter** in 1902. There was a core group within Anushilan comprising Barindra Kumar Ghosh and Bhupendra Nath Datta etc. who started a weekly 'yugantar' and took few abortive actions. There was a lack of mass base in support of terrorism in Bengal and therefore it failed to withstand the weight of state repression.

### Revolutionary Activities in Bengal

Year	Activities
1906	<b>The weekly Yugantar</b> was started by an inner circle within Anushilan (Barindra Kumar Ghosh and Bhupendranath Dutta). It advocated revolutionary violence.
1907	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <b>failed attempt</b> was made by the Yugantar group on the life of British official, <b>Sir Fuller</b>. Sir Fuller was the first Lt. Governor of the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam.</li> <li>• The attempts were made to <b>derail the train</b> on which the <b>lieutenant-governor, Sri Andrew Fraser</b>, was travelling</li> </ul>
1908, Alipore Conspiracy	<p><b>Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose threw a bomb</b> at a carriage supposed to be carrying a judge, Kingsford, in Muzaffarpur. <b>Kingsford</b> was not in the carriage. Unfortunately, two British ladies, instead, got killed. This resulted in <b>the court trial</b> in the name of <b>Alipore conspiracy case</b>. It is called as Manicktolla bomb conspiracy or Muraripukur conspiracy.</p> <p><b>Result of the court trial</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prafulla Chaki</b> shot himself dead while <b>Khudiram Bose</b> was tried and hanged.</li> <li>• The whole <b>Anushilan group was arrested</b>. The Ghosh brothers, <b>Aurobindo and Barindra</b>, were tried in this.</li> <li>• <b>Chittaranjan Das</b> defended Aurobindo. Aurobindo was acquitted of all charges.</li> <li>• <b>Barindra Ghosh</b>, as the head of the secret society of revolutionaries and <b>Ullaskar Dutt</b>, as the maker of bombs, were <b>given the death</b> penalty which was later commuted to life in prison.</li> <li>• During the trial, Narendra Goswami, who had turned approver and Crown witness, was shot dead by two co-accused, Satyendranath Bose and Kanailal Dutta in jail.</li> <li>• In February 1909, the <b>public prosecutor was shot dead in Calcutta</b>.</li> </ul>



Year	Activities
1908, Barah Dacoity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Barah dacoity was organised by <b>Dacca Anushilan under Pulin Das</b> to raise funds for revolutionary activities.</li> </ul>
1912, Delhi Conspiracy	<p><b>Rashbehari Bose</b> and <b>Sachin Sanyal</b> staged a bomb attack on <b>Viceroy Hardinge</b> while he was making his official entry into the new capital of Delhi in December 1912. Hardinge was injured, but not killed. Investigations led to the Delhi Conspiracy trial.</p> <p><b>Result:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Basant Kumar Biswas, Amir Chand and Avadh Behari</b> were convicted and executed for their roles in the conspiracy.</li> <li>Rashbehari escaped.</li> </ul>
1914-18, Zimmerman Plan	<p><b>Bagha Jatin</b> or Jatindranath Mukherjee was associated with western Anushilan Samiti. The samiti emerged as the <b>Jugantar party (or Yugantar)</b>. Bagha Jatin was the commander-in-chief of the <b>Jugantar Party</b>. He revitalised links between the central organisation in Calcutta and other places in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.</p> <p><b>During the First World War</b>, the Jugantar party arranged to import German arms and ammunition through sympathisers and revolutionaries abroad. <b>Jatin asked Rashbehari Bose to take charge of Upper India</b>, aiming to bring about an all-India insurrection in what has come to be called the '<b>German Plot</b>' or the '<b>Zimmerman Plan</b>'.</p> <p><b>Action of Jugantary Party and its Demise</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Jugantar party raised funds through a series of dacoities</b> which came to be known as taxicab dacoities and boat dacoities, so as to work out the Indo-German conspiracy.</li> <li>It was planned that a guerrilla force would be organised to start an uprising in the country, with a seizure of Fort William and a mutiny by armed forces.</li> <li>The plot was leaked out by a traitor and the German plot failed.</li> <li><b>Jatin Mukherjee was shot</b> dead in Balasore in Orissa coast in September 1915.</li> </ul>

## Evaluation

Revolutionary activity in Bengal had **inspired the educated youth** for a generation or more. **But on the other side an overemphasis on the Hindu** religion kept the Muslims aloof. It encouraged impractical heroism and no involvement of the masses was envisaged. It was coupled with the narrow upper caste social base of the movement in Bengal, which severely limited the scope of the revolutionary activity.

## Maharashtra

One of the first revolutionary activity was led by Vasudeva Balwant Phadke under the Ramosi Peasant Force in 1879. It aimed to get rid of the

British by starting an armed revolt which would disrupt the communication lines. It used dacoities to raise funds for these activities. However, the force was suppressed prematurely.

Furthermore, Tilak propagated the ideas of militant nationalism through Ganapati and Shivaji festivals. The Chapekar brothers – Damodar and Balkrishna – murdered the plague commissioner of Poona, Rand, and Lt. Ayerest in 1897. A secret society, **Mitra Mela**, was organized by Savarkar and others which merged later in 1904 with 'Abhinav Bharat'. Nasik, Poona and Bombay emerged as centres of bomb manufacture. The DM of Nasik, Jackson was also the victim of revolutionary terrorism.



## Revolutionary Activities in Maharashtra

Year	Activities
1890s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tilak propagated a spirit of militant nationalism, including use of violence, through Ganapati and Shivaji festivals and his journals Kesari and Mahratta.</li><li>• Two of Tilak's disciples—the Chapekar brothers, Damodar and Balkrishna—murdered the Plague Commissioner of Poona, Rand, and Lt. Ayerst in 1897.</li></ul>
1909	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anant Lakshman Kanhere (member of Abhinav Bharat) killed A.M.T. Jackson, the Collector of Nasik.</li></ul>

### Punjab

Occurrence of Famines, increase in Land revenue and oppressive irrigation tax along with the practice of Beggar by the Zamindars led to rise of militant nationalism in Punjab. The events in Bengal also played the role of instigating the rise of terrorists' activities there. Some of these activists were:

1. Lala Lajpat Rai- who brought out 'Punjabi' was one of the major extremist leaders. He contributed to the mainstream national liberation struggle and inspired many young men to take up revolutionary activities.
2. Ajit Singh- The uncle of Bhagat Singh organized the extremist organization by name of – **Anjuman-i-mohisban-i-watan** in **Lahore** with its journal, **Bharat Mata**. Before getting involved in extremists' activities he was urging non-payment of revenue and water charges among Chenab colonists and Bari Doab peasants. Other leaders were – Agha Haidr, Sayed Haider Raza, Bhai Parmanand, Lal Chand 'Falak'

The government reacted with a ban on public meetings in 1908 and later on deported leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh. This led to the downfall in extremist activities in Punjab.

## REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES IN ABROAD

Government crackdown on Press and other high-handed tactics led revolutionaries to seek safe havens abroad.

### London

**Shyamji Krishna Verma**- He established an Indian **Home rule society called "Indian House"** and a journal '**The Sociologists**' in 1905 in London. **Savarkar and Hardayal** also became the members of the 'India house'. Savarkar was finally extradited in 1910 and transported for life for the Nasik Conspiracy case. Madan Lal Dhingra who was also a member of India House assassinated the India office bureaucrat Curzon-Wyllie in 1909. The assassination marked the start of the London Police's crackdown on the India house's activities. A number of India House activists including Shyamji Krishna Varma and Bhikaji Cama, fled to other parts of Europe to continue their work in support of Indian nationalism. Hardayal moved to the United States.

### Paris and Geneva

When London became too risky for revolutionary activities, new centers emerged in Paris and Geneva. Madam Bhikaji Cama- a Parsi revolutionary brought out 'Bande Mataram' and established contacts with French socialist. Ajit Singh also operated from these centers.

### Berlin

Virendranath Chattopadhyay set up his base at Berlin to carry forward the revolutionary activities and include sympathetic Germans as supporters for the cause. Virendranath Chattopadhyay, Bhupendranath Dutta, Lala Hardayal and others with the help of the German established the **Berlin Committee for Indian Independence in 1915**.

### Missions sent from Europe

The Indian revolutionaries in Europe sent missions to **Baghdad, Persia, Turkey and Kabul** to work among Indian troops and the Indian prisoners



of war (POWs) and to incite anti-British feelings among the people of these countries.

### Kabul

**Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh, Barkatullah and Obaidullah Sindhi** went to Kabul to organise a 'provisional Indian government' there with the help of the crown prince, Amanullah.

### United States of America

A revolutionary group known as **the Ghadar party** was organised with its headquarters at **San Francisco**. The revolutionaries of this party included mainly ex-soldiers and peasants who had migrated from the Punjab to the USA and Canada in search of better employment opportunities. **Leaders like** Lala Hardayal, Ramchandra, Bhagwan Singh, Kartar Singh Saraba, Barkatullah, and Bhai Parmanand were associated with this.

### CONSPIRACIES

The revolutionary terrorists also tried to organize military conspiracies with the help of Indian soldiers in the British army and also thought that of foreign countries hostile to Britain. For revolutionaries, striving for immediate complete independence, the First World war seemed a heaven-sent opportunity, draining India of troops (the number of white soldiers was reduced to just 15,000) and bringing the possibility of financial and military help from the enemies of Britain, mainly Germany and Turkey. It was one point of time when a successful coup d'état appeared possible. **Britain's war with Turkey brought about close cooperation between Hindu nationalists and militant Muslim pan-Islamists.** As a result of this cooperation, important Muslim revolutionary leaders emerged, men like **Barkatullah in Ghadar Party and Deoband Mullahs like Muhammad Hasan and Obaidulla Sindhi.**

In Bengal, most of the revolutionary groups united under **Jatin Mukherjee popularly known as 'Bagha Jatin'**. These groups planned the disruption of rail communications, seizure of Fort William in Calcutta and landing of German arms (for

arranging this **Naren Bhattacharji, later known as M.N. Roy was sent to Java**). The grandiose plans were, however, ruined by poor coordination and Jatin died a hero's death near Balasore on the Orissa coast where he had been tracked down by the police through the help of local villagers- a tragic reminder of the essential social isolation of the Bengal revolutionaries.

The Bengal plans were part of a far-flung conspiracy organized by **Rash Bihari Bose and Sachindranath Sanyal** in cooperation with the returned Ghadarites in Punjab. The latter had started coming back in thousands after the outbreak of the war to fight for the country's freedom. But many of the Punjabis who returned after 1914, were quickly rounded up by the British and the plan for a coordinated revolt on 21st February 1915, based on mutinies by **Ferozpur, Lahore and Rawalpindi garrisons** was foiled at the last movement by treachery.

### REASONS FOR DECLINE OF REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES

- **Lack of Confidence due to secrecy:** The revolutionary terrorists and their movements gradually faded out and failed to achieve their main goal of complete freedom. In fact, terrorism as a political weapon was bound to fail. The terrorists came mainly from urban and middle-class intelligentsia, out of touch with the peasants and workers. Hence, they could not reach and mobilize the masses. Furthermore, as their activities had to be carried out secretly, they could not take the people into confidence. The social limitations of revolutionary terrorism remain obvious; in a 1918 official list of killed or convicted revolutionaries in Bengal, no less than 165 came from the upper castes (Brahmin, Kayastha and Vaishya). Thus, apart from class limitations, it also had caste limitations, which further prevented it from acquiring a mass base.



- **Lack of Communication and Leadership:**

They also lacked a common plan and central leadership. Most of the time they were working at cross purposes and there were also no proper communications among them. With such disorganization and lack of communication facilities they were bound to fail against the enemy which was an imperialist power at its zenith with all kinds of weapons as well as efficient transport and communications.

- **Ruthless Repression by the Britishers:** The British Indian government on its part followed a very ruthless and repressive policy towards them. The government through a series of conspiracy cases, stem penalties and harsh

laws, broke the back of terrorist. The Newspaper (Incitement of Offences) Act, the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the Explosive Substances Act, the Indian Press Act and the Defense of Indian Act were added to the armory of bureaucracy.

- **Lacked Unity:** Moreover, the intense religiosity of most of the early secret societies (a feature which was to partly disappear over time) helped to keep Muslim aloof or hostile, though it acted as uniting bond among the Hindu terrorists. The much quoted Gita doctrine of 'Nishkama Karma' stimulated an impractical heroism and cult of martyrdom for its own sake in place of effective programs and plans.



**In 1914, after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, World war began and lasted until 1918.** During the conflict, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire (the **Central Powers**) fought against Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Romania, Japan and the United States (the **Allied Powers**). Since Britain was involved in this war and Britain was ruled by India in those days, therefore Indian soldiers had to join this war.

### Archduke's assassination

On June 28, 1914, the Archduke of Austria, Franz Ferdinand, and his wife were on an official visit to the city of Sarajevo in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a Serb-dominated province of Austria-Hungary. During the visit, Serbian militants, seeking independence for the territory, made two separate attempts on the archduke's life. In the first attempt, they threw a bomb bounced off the car and failed to kill or injure the intended victim. Later that day, while the Archduke was en route to a hospital to visit an officer wounded by the bomb, his driver turned down a side street where Gavrilo Princip, a nineteen-year-old militant Bosnian Serb who had been part of the assassination attempt that morning, happened to be standing. Seizing the opportunity, Princip stepped up to that car's window and shot both the archduke and his wife.

## IMPACT OF WORLD WAR ON INDIAN NATIONALISM

**India** played an important role in World War-I. However, India's role in the war is often overlooked due to the horrors experienced in trench warfare and by Europe's tendency to focus on battles such as those fought at the Somme and Verdun, which many assume only Europeans fought in. When war broke out in 1914, India was in a state of growing political turmoil. The Indian National Congress had grown from a group that merely discussed issues to a body that pushed for more self-government. Before the advent of the war, the Germans had

spent much time and energy trying to foment an anti-British movement in India. Many shared the view point that if Britain had been caught in a crisis somewhere in the world, Indian separatists would have taken the opportunity to advance their cause.

### IMPACT ON INDIAN SOLDIERS IN WORLD WAR-I

Indian soldiers saw it as their duty to honor their clan or caste by fighting bravely on the battlefield. It is often mentioned in various letters that Indian soldiers took part in this war, inspired by a sense of personal duty towards Emperor George V. From 1917-19, India made a huge contribution to Britain's war effort. It sent gallant numbers of volunteers to fight and die on behalf of the allied forces. Almost 1.5 million Muslim, Sikh and Hindu men from regions such as the Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Bihar volunteered in the Indian Expeditionary Force, because becoming a soldier paid well and meant becoming part of the **'warrior' caste, which gave high status.**

### Social Impact of First World War on India

In spite of all the ill effects of the war, between 1911 and 1921, there was a tremendous increase in the literacy rate among the enlisted military communities. In those days, soldiers learned to read and write for their foreign campaigns, because of the importance and usefulness of men in the battlefield. The reverence of particular communities participating in the war grew in society. In addition, a plethora of non-combatants were also recruited from India – such as nurses, doctors, etc. Hence, during this war, the work area of women also expanded and they also gained social importance. However, Indians were rebuffed with essential services in situations where such services / skills (nurses, doctors) were already scant.

### Economic impact

The call for Indian goods in Britain grew exponentially as the war on production capabilities in Britain was severely affected. Although the war



disrupted shipping routes, it meant that industries in India had to suffer difficulties due to the lack of inputs previously imported from Great Britain and Germany. So, there were supply constraints as well as an additional demand.

### Impact on Indian National Movement

- **The Resentment of the Indians:** The British government declared India an allied nation and belligerent. Indian people and resources were used in the war. This created great resentment among the Indians, especially when they were not taken into confidence before going to war.
- **Muslims were agonized:** The British were fighting against the Turkish Empire which was ruled by the Caliph (Khalifa). Muslims had a deep sense of reverence for Caliph. Indian Muslims joined the Caliphate (Khilafat) movement to defend Turkey against the British.
- **Unrest among the Peasants:** During the war, the peasant's unrest also increased. These movements helped in preparing the ground for the mass movement.
- **Home Rule Movement:** Annie Besant in 1914 joined Congress. In 1916, with Bal Gangadhar Tilak, she launched the Home Rule Movement. The Home Rule League demanded self-government for the Indians.
- **The Lucknow Pact (1916):** In 1916, at the Lucknow Session, the 'moderates' and the 'extremists' were united. Additionally, a pact was made between the Congress and the Muslim League to work together on their demands for greater share and power for Indians at the Executive Council and election of members of the Legislative Councils.

### RESPONSE OF NATIONALISTS TO BRITISH PARTICIPATION IN FIRST WORLD WAR

The nationalist response to Britain's participation in World War-I was threefold:

- The Moderates supported the empire as a matter of duty.

- The Extremists, including Tilak (who was released in June 1914), supported the war efforts in the mistaken belief that Britain would repay India's loyalty with gratitude in the form of self-government.
- The revolutionaries decided to use this opportunity to wage a war on British rule and liberate India. The revolutionary activity was carried out through the Ghadar Party in North America, Berlin Committee in Europe, and some scattered mutinies by Indian soldiers, such as the one in Singapore.

### BRITISH ATTITUDE DURING OR IMMEDIATELY AFTER WORLD WAR-I

At that time there was a period of dominance of Indian nationalism, these nationalists believed that as a result of Britain's contribution to the war, the British would be lenient towards the Indian residents and would provide more constitutional rights. As expected, India had given full support to Britain in the world war as promised to achieve democracy but soon after the war the Rowlatt Act was passed by the British Government. As a result, a sense of dissatisfaction aroused among the British rule in Indians, it led to the rise of national consciousness and soon the curtain of despotic rule was revealed.

### REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITY DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The war drained India of the British and Indian troops which was seen as a golden chance by the revolutionaries (at one point the number of British soldiers went down to only 15,000). It also raised hope of help from the countries against the English side (Turkey and Germany). The revolutionary activity during the First World War was mainly centered at –

- North America- The Ghadar party
- Europe- The Berlin committee
- South East Asia – Singapore



## NORTH AMERICA: THE GHADAR MOVEMENT

Large-scale Indian immigration to the **Pacific coast of North America** occurred in the 20th century, especially from Punjab, which was facing an economic depression. The **Canadian government responded to this very influx with legislation** to restrict entry from the South Asians into Canada and at restricting the political rights of those already in the country. The Punjabi community had up to this point been an **important loyal force** for the British Empire and the Commonwealth. The community expected its commitment would be honored with the same gusto and rights which the British and colonial governments extended to British and white immigrants.

The restrictive legislation fueled growing discontent, protests and anti-colonial sentiments within the community. Faced with increasingly difficult situations, the community began to organize itself into political groups. Many Punjabis had also moved to the United States, but they encountered similar political and social problems. Meanwhile, in India nationalist activism of Indian students had begun declining in the east coast of North America towards 1910, but gradually shifted west to San Francisco. The arrival of **Har Dayal** from Europe at that time closed the gap between the intellectual agitators in New York and the predominantly Punjabi labour workers and migrants in the west coast, and laid the foundations of the Ghadar movement.

### Komagata Maru Incident

In May 1914, the Canadian government refused to allow the 400 Indian passengers of the ship Komagata Maru to get off at Vancouver. The trip was planned as an attempt to circumvent Canadian exclusion laws that effectively prevented Indian immigration. Before the arrival of the ship in Vancouver, its approach was announced on German radio, and the authorities in British Columbia were prepared to prevent the passengers from entering Canada. This incident became a focal point for the Indian community

in Canada which gathered in support of the passengers and against the government's policies. After a two-months legal battle, 24 of them were allowed to immigrate. The ship was escorted out of Vancouver by the protected cruiser **HMCS Rainbow** and sent back to India.

On reaching Calcutta, the passengers were detained under the Defense of India Act at Budge Budge port by the British Indian government, which made efforts to forcibly send them back to Punjab. This caused turmoil at Budge Budge and resulted in fatalities on both sides. Ghadar leaders like Barkatullah and Taraknath Das used the inflammatory speeches surrounding the Komagata Maru event as a unifying point and successfully brought many disgruntled Indians in North America into the party's fold. The British Indian Army, on the other hand, was contributing enormously to the Allied war effort in World War-I. Consequently, a reduced force, estimated to have been 15,000 troops in late 1914, was stationed in India. **It was in this scenario that concrete plans for organizing uprisings in India were made.** In September 1913 a Ghadarite named Mathra Singh travelled to Shanghai to promote the nationalist cause amongst Indians there, followed by a visit to India in January 1914. When Singh circulated Ghadar literature among Indian soldiers through clandestine sources before leaving for Hong Kong, Singh reported that the situation in India is favorable for revolution.

### Task assigned to Ghadarites

By October 1914, many Ghadarites had returned to India and were given tasks such as contacting the Indians revolutionaries and organizations, spreading propaganda and literature, and organizing arms in the country. **On August 29, the first group of 60 Ghadarites led by Jawala Singh left San Francisco for Canton aboard the steamer Korea.** They were to sail on to India, where they would be provided with arms to organize a revolt. At Canton, more Indians joined, and the group, now sailed for Calcutta on a Japanese vessel. They were to be joined by



more Ghadarites arriving in smaller groups. During September and October, about 300 Indians left for India in various ships like SS Siberia, Chinyo Maru, China Manchuria, SS tenyo Maru, SS Mongolia and SS Shinyo Maru. Although the Koreans's party itself was uncovered and arrested on arrival at Calcutta, a successful underground network was established between the United States and India.

### Formation of Ghadar

The **Ghadar Party**, initially the Pacific Coast Hindustan Association, was formed in 1913 in the United States under the leadership of **Har Dayal**, with **Sohan Singh Bhakna** as its president. It drew members from Indian immigrants, largely from Punjab. Many of its members were also from the University of California at Berkeley including Dayal, Tarak Nath Das, Kartar Singh Sarabha and V.G Pingle. The party quickly gained support from Indian expatriates, especially in the United States, Canada and Asia. Ghadar meetings were held in Los Angeles, Vienna, Washington, D.C and Shanghai.

### Objective

**Ghadar's ultimate goal was to overthrow British colonial rule in India through armed revolution.** It viewed the Congress-led mainstream movement for dominion status modest and the latter's constitutional methods as soft. Ghadar's foremost strategy was to provoke Indian soldiers to revolt. To this end, in November 1913, Ghadar founded the Yugantar Ashram press in San Francisco. The press produced the Hindustan Ghadar newspaper and other nationalist publications.

Towards the end of 1913, the party established contact with famous revolutionaries in India, including Rash Behari Bose. **An Indian edition of the Hindustan Ghadar** essentially adopted the philosophies of anarchism and revolutionary

terrorism against British interests in India. Political discontent and violence escalated in Punjab, and Ghadarite publications that reached Bombay from California were deemed seditious and banned by the British Raj. These events, coupled by evidence of prior Ghadarite incitement in the **Delhi-Lahore Conspiracy of 1912**, led the British government to duress the American State Department to subdue Indian revolutionary activities and Ghadarite literature, which originated mostly from San Francisco.

### EUROPE- THE BERLIN COMMITTEE

The Berlin committee was set up in 1915 by **Virendranath Chattopadhyay, Bhupendranath Dutta, Lala Hardayal** and others with the help of other Indians in Germany. They were helped by the German foreign Office under 'Zimmerman plan'. They sought to send arms to India to incite rebellion and also send volunteers to organize armed invasion on British India to free the country of foreign rule. They send revolutionaries to Baghdad, Persia, Turkey and Kabul to work among Indian troops abroad.

Various missions were also sent by Indian revolutionaries in countries like Baghdad, Turkey, Persia and Kabul aiming to work among Indian troops and Indian prisoners of war and inciting within them the anti- British feeling.

### SINGAPORE

The mutiny on 15th February 1915 by Punjabi 5th light infantry and 36th Sikh battalion was one of the most notable mutiny in Singapore. This was led by Jamadar Chisti Khan, **Jamadar Abdul Ghani and Subedar Daud Khan**. However, it was crushed in a fierce battle and many people were executed and transported for life.



The Home Rule Movement was the Indian response to **the First World War** in a less charged but more effective way than the response of Indians living abroad which took the form of the romantic Ghadar adventure. The Indian Home Rule League was organized on the lines of **Irish Home Rule Leagues** and they represented the emergence of a new trend of aggressive politics. Annie Besant and Tilak were the pioneers of this new trend.

## THE BACKGROUND OF THE MOVEMENT

During the **First World war**, the nationalist's feelings grew stronger, which outburst into the rise of two Home Rule Leagues in India, one was founded by **Tilak at Poona** and the other by **Annie Besant at Madras**. **Annie Besant** was one of the fiery politicians of the national movement. She was one of the leaders of the **Theosophical Movement** and had adopted India as her homeland and worked for its social, educational and religious regeneration. She was disappointed with the tone of the moderates. Like a true patriot of the nation, she wanted to do something real and concrete for the political liberation of India. It was with this aim that she organized the Home Rule Movement. Both Tilak and Besant realized that the sanction of a Moderate-dominated Congress as well as full cooperation of the Extremists was essential for the movement to succeed.

Having failed at the 1914 session of the Congress to reach a **Moderate- Extremists Rapprochement**, Tilak and Besant decided to revive political activity on their own. In early 1915, Annie Besant had launched a campaign calling for India's post-war self-government on the white colony line. She campaigned through her newspapers, **New India and Commonwealth**, and through public meetings and conferences. At the annual session of the Congress in 1915 the efforts of Tilak and Besant met with success. It was decided that the Extremists should be admitted to the Congress. Although Besant failed to get the Congress to approve her scheme of Home Rule Leagues, the Congress did commit

itself to a programme of educative propaganda and to a revival of local-level Congress committees. Not willing to wait for too long, Besant made a condition that if the Congress did not implement its commitments, she would be free to set up her own Leagues which she finally had to, as there was no response from the Congress.

## SETTING UP OF TWO DIFFERENT LEAGUES

Tilak and Besant decided to put a new life in the national movement of India. They started two separate Home Rule Leagues to conduct propaganda across the country in support of the Home Rule grant application after World War I.

Tilak's League was set up in **April, 1916** and was restricted to **Maharashtra (excluding Bombay city), Karnataka, Central Provinces and Berar**. It had six branches and demands included swarajya, state formation on the basis of language and vernacular education.

Besant's League was set up in September **1916 in Adyar near Madras** and covered the rest of India (including Bombay city). It had 200 branches, was loosely organized as compared to Tilak's League and had **George Arundale** as the organizing secretary. Besides Arundale, the main work was done by **B.W Wadia** and **C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar**. The leaders of the Home Rule Movement followed constitutional methods because they did not like to embarrass the British Government during the war. Tilak made a whirlwind tour of the country in 1916 and in his speeches, he said, "Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it." He said that Home Rule was the only cure of India's political ills and the grievances of the Indians. He preached the idea of Home Rule through his two newspapers – **Kesari and Maratha**.

### Annie Besant

Annie Besant had come to India in 1893 to work for the **Theosophical Society**. Since 1907, she had been spreading the message of Theosophy from her headquarters in **Adyar**, a suburb of Madras. **New India and Commonwealth** were her two newspapers. Annie Besant became the **first women Congress President** in 1917.



The Home Rule agitation was later joined by **Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Bhullabhai Desai, Chittaranjan Das, Madan Mohan Malviya, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Tej Bahadur Sapru and Lala Rajpat Rai**. Some of these leaders became heads of local branches. Many of the Moderate Congressmen who were disillusioned with Congress inactivity, and some members of Gokhale's Servants of India Society also joined the agitation. However, Anglo-Indians, most of the Muslims and non-brahmins from South did not join as they felt Home Rule would mean rule of the Hindu majority, mainly the high caste.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE HOME RULE LEAGUES

The League's campaign aimed to convey the message of Home Rule as self-government to the common man. It carried a much broader appeal than the earlier mobilization did and also attracted up to this point politically backward regions of Gujarat and Sindh. The aim was to be achieved by promoting political education and discussion through public meetings organizing libraries and reading rooms containing books on national politics, holding conferences, organizing classes for students on politics, propaganda through newspapers, pamphlets, posters, illustrated postcards, plays, religious songs, etc., collecting funds, organizing social work, and participating in local government activities. The Russian Revolution of 1917 proved to be an added advantage for the Home Rule campaign.

### Factors Leading to the Home Rule Movement

- **Dissatisfaction from Minto-Morley Reforms:** Nationalists were dissatisfied with the Morley-Minto reforms as they did not provide the desired political reforms.
- **Wartime Miseries:** High taxation and a rise in prices during the First World War made people ready to participate in the movement.

- **Exposure of myths:** The setbacks to Britain and its allies during the First World War exposed the myth of white superiority.
- **Release of Tilak:** Tilak was ready to assume leadership after his release in June 1914. He had reassured the government of his loyalty and to the Moderates that he wanted, like the Irish Home Rulers, a reform of the administration and not an overthrow of the government.
- **Mrs. Annie Besant** wanted to build up a movement in India on the lines of the Irish Home Rule League.

### What do we understand by the term Home rule?

Home Rule refers to a self-government granted by a central or regional government to its dependent political units on condition that their people should remain politically loyal to it. This was a common feature in the ancient Roman Empire and the modern British Empire. In Ireland the Home Rule Movement gathered force in the 1880s and a system of Home Rule was established by the Government of Ireland Act (1920) in six counties of Northern Ireland and later by the Anglo-Irish Treaty (1921) in the remaining 26 counties in the south.

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The movement reached its peak in 1917. The Government got suspicions at the activities of the Home Rule Movement and it thought of suppressing it with a heavy hand. The Government made use of the Defense of India Act to curb the activities of the agitators. Students were prohibited from attending Home Rule meetings. Tilak was prosecuted for his fiery and passionate speeches and his entry in Punjab and Delhi was banned. Important leaders of this movement including Annie Besant were jailed. Various restrictions were imposed on the press by using the Indian Press Act of 1910.

But the repression followed by the Government only added fuel to the fire. Strikes, agitation, and protests, meetings were organized throughout



the country. The government took notice of the seriousness of the protests that erupted in support of the Home Rule League. The Indians on the other hand were willingly ready to pay any price to achieve the Home Rule. Montagu, the secretary of the state, commented that 'Shiva' cut his wife into fifty-two pieces only to discover that he had fifty-two wives. This is what happened to the Government of India when it imprisoned Besant. The Government released Besant in September 1917. Therefore, to appease the Nationalists, on August 20, 1917, the Secretary of State for India made a statement announcing British policy towards India.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT

It transformed the national movement into the grassroot movement as more and more people began to take part in it. It worked as a light house when the political atmosphere in the country was full of disappointment. It breathed new life in the national movement. It gave definite form and direction to the movement for Swaraj. It also influenced the foreign statesmen and several of the American leaders. Many British members also supported the Indians' demand for Home Rule.

#### Benefits that occurred due to the Movement

- **Emergence of politically aware nationalist:** The movement created a generation of passionate nationalist.
- **Organisational Link:** The movement created an organizational link between the town and the country, which was to be proved crucial in later years when the movement entered its mass phase in a true sense.
- **Ground for Gandhian Movement:** The Movement prepared the masses for politics of the Gandhian style.
- **Emphasis on Masses:** It shifted the emphasis from the educated elite to the masses and permanently deflected the movement from the course mapped by the Moderates.

- The August 1917 declaration of Montagu and the Montford reforms were influenced by the Home Rule agitation.
- **Moderate-Extremist reunion:** Tilak's and Besant's effort in the Moderate-Extremist reunion at Lucknow (1916) revived the Congress as an effective instrument of Indian nationalism.
- It gave a new vision and a sense of urgency to the national movement.

### REASONS FOR THE DOWNFALL OF THE MOVEMENT BY 1919

- Ineffective organization and coordination among the leaders.
- **Communal riots:** Growing communal riots during 1917-18
- Moderates distanced themselves after Extremists spoke of **passive resistance** from September 1918 onwards.
- Reforms by Montague-Chelmsford which became evident in 1918, further divided the nationalist ranks.
- **Moderates pacified:** The Moderates who had joined the congress after Besant's arrest were pacified by talk of reforms (contained in Montagu's statement of August 1917) and Besant's release.
- **Moderate-Extremist reunion:** The movement helped the Moderate-Extremist reunion at Lucknow (1916) and revived the Congress as an effective instrument of Indian nationalism.
- **Gandhi's arrival:** Gandhi's fresh approach to the struggle for freedom was gaining momentum. The mass movement as advocated by Gandhi pushed the home rule movement onto the side lines.
- **Tilak had to go abroad** (September 1918) in connection with a case while Annie Besant was not sure over her response to the reforms and the techniques of passive resistance.



- With Besant unable to give a positive lead and Tilak away in England, the movement was left leaderless.

## LUCKNOW SESSION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (1916)

The annual session of the Congress was held in **December 1916 at Lucknow**. It was presided over by **Ambika Charan Majumdar**.

Disunity in the ranks of nationalists was injuring their cause and they thought they needed to put up a united front before the government. The growing nationalist sentiments in the country and the urge for national unity produced **two historic developments** (discussed below) at the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress. In 1914 when Tilak was released from jail, he saw the change in the political situation and set out to unify the two factions of Congress.

### SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS AT LUCKNOW SESSION

1. **Reunion of Extremists and Moderates:** The split was unfavorable to both the moderates and extremists. Following were the factors that led to the Reunion of Moderates and Extremists:
  - **Political Inactivity in Congress:** Both Moderates and the Extremists realized that the Surat split had led to political inactivity in Congress. Also, old controversies of Surat Split had lost their relevance now.
  - **Efforts for reunion were made:** Annie Besant and Tilak made several efforts for the reunion. **For example:** Tilak denounced acts of violence to build trust with the Moderates.
  - **Opposition from Moderates faded:** **Gopala Krishna Gokhale and Pherozshah Mehta** had led the Moderate opposition to the Extremists during the Surat Split. Their **death** had facilitated the reunion.

2. **Lucknow pact (1916) between Muslims league and congress:** Congress and Muslim league came together to present common demands to the government. This coming together of Muslim league and congress was facilitated by the presence of younger generation of members of Muslim league. The league was gradually turning into an anti-imperialist organization. The major reason for the shift in the league's position were:

- **Britain had refused to help Turkey** in its war in **Balkans (1912-13)** and with **Italy during 1911**. The Turkish Khalifa was religious political leader of all Muslims and the denial of help infuriated the Muslims
- Those who supported the partition of Bengal were annoyed at its annulment.
- The refusal of the British government to set up a University at Aligarh with powers to affiliate colleges all over India also alienated some Muslims.
- The limited political outlook of Aligarh school was not able to placate the younger members of the League who wanted to participate in bolder national politics. Hence, the league found itself on the same side with congress favoring self-government.

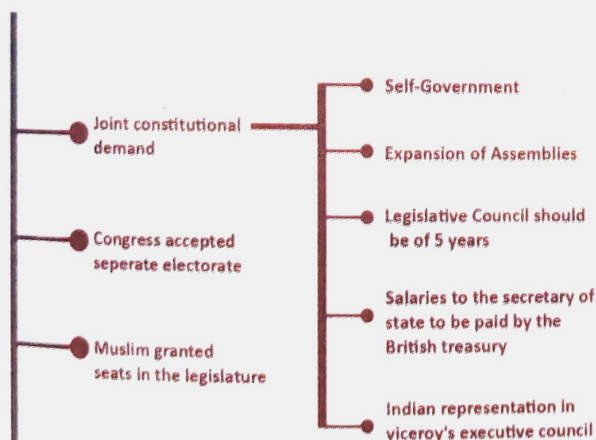
### Nature of the Pact

- **Joint constitutional demands:** Muslim League agreed to **present joint constitutional demands with the Congress to the government**. The joint constitutional demands were:
  - ♦ **Self-Government:** British Government in India should declare that it would confer self-government on Indians at an early date.
  - ♦ **Expansion of Assemblies:** The representative assemblies at the central, as well as provincial levels, should be further expanded with an elected majority and more powers given to them.



- **Tenure of Legislative Council:** The term of the legislative council should be five years.
- **Salaries of the Secretary of the State:** The salaries of the Secretary of State for India should be paid by the British treasury and not drawn from Indian funds.
- **Indian Representation:** Half the members of the viceroy's and provincial governors' executive councils should be Indians.
- **Separate electorate was accepted by the congress:** The Congress accepted the Muslim League's position on separate electorates which would continue till any one community demanded joint electorates.
- **Muslim granted seats in the legislatures:** The Muslims were also granted a fixed proportion of seats in the legislatures at all-India and provincial levels.

#### Nature of Lucknow Pact



#### Lacunae in Lucknow Pact

The acceptance of a separate electorate by Congress led to the recognition of the Muslim League representing a distinct section of Indian society and thus the seeds of partition were sown. This was an important event in the evolution of two nation theory of the Muslim League. **The Lucknow Pact thus cleared the way for the future revival of communalism in Indian politics.**

## MONTAGUE'S STATEMENT OR MONTFORD'S DECLARATION OF AUGUST 1917

Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, presented the historic Montagu Declaration (August Declaration) in the British Parliament, which proposed the increased participation of Indians in the administration and the development of self-governing institutions in India.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF MONTFORD'S DECLARATION OF 1917

It promised that the Indians would gradually be associated with the developments of administration and self-governing institutions would be developed. **It asserted that responsible government in India is an integral part of the British Empire and the ultimate goal of the government would be achieved in stages.** Also, the British Government and Government of India would be the sole authority to judge the time and measure of each advancement and in this, they would be guided by the responsible Indian leaders and their ability to handle duties.

The famous declaration closed one chapter in India's constitutional history and paved the way for another. With this declaration benevolent despotism was dead and India's right to Swaraj was admitted and despotism was to give place to constitutional government. The announcement was welcomed by all political parties. Perhaps the greatest importance of the declaration lies in the fact that every Indian was feeling convinced that self-government for India was within the domain of possibility. This declaration gave the nationalist leaders the moral courage to continue their political fight.

#### Drawbacks

- **No Time frame:** The British did not mention **any specific time frame** for the introduction of a responsible government.



- **Exclusion of Indians:** The British government alone was to decide the nature and the timing of advance towards a responsible government. This means the British would decide what was good and what was bad for Indians without involving Indians.

## MONTAGU-CHELMSFORD REFORMS (GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1919)

This Act was based on the **Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms**. Some important provisions of the Act were as follows:

### At Centre

- **Bicameral legislature:** The **Indian Legislative Council at Centre** was replaced by a bicameral system consisting of a Council of State (Upper House) and a Legislative Assembly (Lower House).
- **Directly elected members:** Upper and Lower house was to have a majority of members who were directly elected. So, direct election was introduced, though the **franchise was much restricted** being based on qualifications of property, tax or education.
- The **chief executive authority was the Governor-General**.
- The governor-general could issue ordinances. He could also **certify bills** that were rejected by the central legislature.
- There had to be the **Executive Council of the Viceroy of eight members**.

### At Province

- **Dyarchy in the provinces:** The Act introduced dyarchy in the provinces. It basically means rule of the two i.e., **executive councillors and ministers**.
- The **Governor was the executive head** of the province.
- The **subjects in Provinces** were divided into two lists – **reserved and transferred**.

- The **governor was in charge of the reserved list** along with his executive councillors.
- The ministers were in charge of subjects under the transferred list.
- The **provincial legislature was to consist of one house only** (legislative council).
- **Separation of provincial and central budgets:** The Act separated for the first time the provincial and central budgets, with provincial legislatures being authorized to make their budgets.

### Miscellaneous provisions

- **Appointment of High Commissioner:** A High Commissioner for India was appointed, who was to hold his office in London for six years and whose duty was to look after Indian trade in Europe.
- **Secretary of State to be paid by the British Exchequer:** The Secretary of State for India who used to get his pay from the Indian revenue was now to be paid by the British Exchequer.
- **Principle of communal representation:** The principle of communal representation was extended with separate electorates for Sikhs, Christians and Anglo-Indians, besides Muslims.

### CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE REFORMS

- **No responsible government** was envisaged in the Act at the all-India level.
- **Franchise was limited** and given to affluent people. The act also promoted a sense of communalism in a separate electoral system
- At the Central level, the legislature had **no control over the viceroy and his executive council**. The central legislature had no power to replace the government.
- The power of the Central legislature in the field of legislation and financial control was also limited.
- At the level of provinces, the division of subjects was irrational and, hence, unworkable. Subjects like irrigation, finance, police, press and justice were 'reserved'.



After World War I, there was a resurgence of nationalist activity in India and in many other colonies in Asia and Africa. India's movement against British Imperialism got a boost with the arrival of **Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi** into the political scenario.

### About Gandhi

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi/ M.K. Gandhi was born on 2nd October 1869 at Porbandar in the state of Gujarat. He completed his legal education in Great Britain and went to South Africa to practice law as an aspiring barrister. Gandhi was always inspired by a high sense of justice and thus was very repulsed by the injustice, discrimination and the degradation to which the Indians residing in the South African colonies were subjected to. Around the year 1893, when he was merely 24 years old, he started the struggle of the Indians in South Africa who were subjected to racial discrimination. One more aspect of Gandhi's outlook was that he would not separate thought and practice, belief and action.



Young Gandhi in S. Africa, 1909.

## EARLY EXPERIENCES OF GANDHI IN SOUTH AFRICA

Gandhi reached South Africa in 1898 in connection with a case involving his client, **Dada**

**Abdullah**. In South Africa, he witnessed the ugly face of white racism and the humiliation which was faced by Asians labourers. Gandhi decided to stay in South Africa to organize the Indian workers to enable them to fight for their rights. He stayed there till 1914 after which he returned to India.

### INDIAN IMMIGRANTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Indian immigration to South Africa had begun by 1890 when the white settlers of S. Africa had recruited indentured Indian labour, mainly from the south of India, to work on the sugar plantations. In the quest to manage these businesses, many Indian merchants came on the scene, most of them belonging to the Memon Muslim community. The other groups of Indians that were present prior to Gandhi's arrival in S. Africa were the ex-indentured labourers who had settled in S. Africa after the expiry of their contracts and their children who were born and brought up in S. Africa. None of these groups of Indians had access to good education or even the working knowledge of English language, even the wealthy merchants knew only English terms enough to help them make trade deals. In a nutshell, we can divide the Indians in South Africa into three categories:

- **The indentured Indian labour:** Mainly from south India, who had migrated to South Africa after 1890 to work on sugar plantations;
- **The merchants:** Mostly Memon Muslims who had followed the laborers;
- **The ex-indentured laborers:** Laborers who had settled down with their children in South Africa after the expiry of their contracts.

The problems faced by Indians in South Africa were:

- They were denied the right to vote.
- They had to register themselves on a regular basis and were made to pay up a poll-tax.
- They were inhibited from living wherever they wished to and were confined to reside in prescribed locations which were highly insanitary and congested.



- In some areas of South Africa, the Asians as well as Africans were prevented by a curfew of 9 p.m. every day (could not stay out of doors after 9 p.m.)
- They were not allowed to use public footpaths.

### **GANDHI'S ARRIVAL AND MODERATE PHASE OF STRUGGLE (1894-1906)**

Gandhi reached Durban (South Africa) in 1893 as a young attorney. When he first arrived in S. Africa, his journey **from Durban to Pretoria** consisted of a series **of racial humiliations**. He was thrown out of a train's first-class compartment only because of his skin colour, no hotel in Johannesburg was willing to provide him a place to stay. This painful personal experience of racial arrogance by the British familiarized him with humiliations and sufferings that Indians were facing in South Africa. Also Gandhi had not come across such racism during his days in London where he studied law.

Thus Gandhi tried to **activate their political consciousness and to mobilize Indians in South Africa** for their rights and justice. There were series of actions taken by him such as:

- Upon his arrival at Pretoria, he immediately **convened a meeting** of all Indians there and offered to **teach English to anybody who wished to learn**.
- He even advocated Indians to organize themselves in a congress and to protest against the oppression meted out to them.
- He voiced his protest through the press. He **wrote to the Natal Advertiser** citing his strong feelings about fair play and justice.
- He **persuaded all the Indians in Pretoria to not sacrifice their dignity** and to resist all and any types of racial disabilities.
- He **set up the Natal Indian Congress** and also **started a newspaper called Indian Opinion**.
- He **petitioned extensively, sent memorials to the South African legislatures, the Colonial Secretary in London and the British**

**Parliament**. He believed that if the British Imperial government is provided with all the facts about the plight of the Indians here in S. Africa then some changes and a fair play may be seen on part of the government since the Indians were British subjects.

Gandhiji after having settled the lawsuit for which he had come to South Africa, prepared to leave for India. But on the eve of his departure from Durban, he raised the **issue of the bill to disenfranchise Indians** which was in the process of being passed by the Natal legislature. The **Indians in South Africa begged Gandhiji to stay on for a month and organize their protest as they could not do so on their own**. Gandhiji agreed to stay on for a month and stayed for twenty years. He was then only twenty-five; when he left South Africa, he was forty-five.

#### **How Gandhiji's experience in South Africa was Unique?**

Gandhiji's experience in South Africa was unique in one respect. As he was **British-educated barrister**, he **demanded many things as a matter of right**, such as first-class train tickets and rooms in hotels, which other Indians before him had never probably even had the courage to ask for. Perhaps, Indians in South Africa believed that they were discriminated against because they were not 'civilized,' that is, westernized. Gandhiji's experience in South Africa, demonstrated clearly that the real cause of discrimination was the assumption of **racial superiority by the White rulers (British)**.

Gandhiji's uniqueness in being the only western-educated Indian in South Africa also simultaneously placed on his shoulders the **responsibility of leading the struggle of the Indians against increasing racial discrimination in South Africa**.

By 1906, Mohandas Gandhi having fully tried out the 'Moderate' methods of struggle, had become convinced that merely these efforts would not lead anywhere. Thus, he started with the **second phase, that of Passive resistance in 1906**.



## PHASE OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE OR SATYAGRAHA (1906-1914)

Gandhi termed the method of passive resistance or civil disobedience as **Satyagraha** – literally meaning to seek the truth.

**Satyagraha** was based on truth and non-violence. Its basic tenets were:

- A Satyagraha was not to submit to what he considered as wrong, but was to always remain truthful, non-violent and fearless.
- He should be ready to accept suffering in his struggle against the evil-doer.
- Suffering was to be a part of his love for truth.
- Even while carrying out his struggle against the evildoer, a true Satyagraha would love the evil-doer; hatred would be alien to his nature.
- True Satyagraha would never bow before evil.
- Only the brave and strong could practice Satyagraha. It was not for the weak and cowards. Even violence was preferred to cowardice.

### SATYAGRAHA AGAINST REGISTRATION CERTIFICATES (1906)

Satyagraha was first used on 11th September, 1906; when the Natal government enacted a **legislation** that made it **compulsory for Indians to take out their Certificates of registration** which had a record of their fingerprints. It was made essential to carry these certificates in person at all times. Under Gandhi's leadership the Indians decided not to submit to this discriminatory measure. Thus, many Indians gathered in the **Empire Theatre in Johannesburg** and resolved not to submit to this law and declared that they were ready to face the consequences.

Gandhi formed the **Passive Resistance Association** to conduct the campaign of defying the law and suffering all the penalties resulting from such a defiance. The government soon started proceedings against Gandhi and his followers.

The **government** jailed **Gandhi and others** who refused to register themselves. The **fear of jail had disappeared** from the minds of the Indians and they didn't budge. The jail was popularly called **King Edward's Hotel**.

Ultimately, General **Smuts** called **Gandhiji** for talks, and promised to withdraw the legislation if Indians voluntarily agreed to register themselves. **Gandhiji accepted and was the first to register**. But Smuts had played a trick; he ordered that the voluntary registrations be ratified under the law. The **Indians under the leadership of Gandhiji retaliated by publicly burning their registration certificates**. In the end, there was a compromise settlement.

### CAMPAIGN AGAINST RESTRICTIONS ON INDIAN MIGRATION

During the time of the protests against the certificates of registration the natal government also brought about a new legislation, **to restrict Indian immigration**. It was quite natural that the fear of the resisting Indians must have made the government take such a step. The campaign led by the Passive Resistance Association then widened to oppose this restriction on Indian Immigration. **August 1908 saw a prominent number of Indians from Natal crossing the frontier from Natal to Transvaal to defy the new immigration laws**. They were immediately arrested. Indians already residing in Transvaal opposed the laws by **hawking without license**. Traders who had licenses too refused to produce their license. **Gandhiji himself landed in jail in October 1908** and, along with the other Indians, was **sentenced to a prison term involving hard physical labour and miserable conditions**. Indian merchants were threatened by the government pertaining to their economic interests.

Despite such harsh imprisonment, the spirit of the resisters could not be broken and finally the government **had to resort to deporting the Indians to India**, especially from the lower economic rungs.



### Sign of fatigue in the Satyagrahis and Setting of Tolstoy Farm

By 1909, the satyagrahis started showing signs of fatigue. The struggle was obviously going to be a protracted one, and the Government was in no mood to relent. **Gandhiji's visit to London in 1909** to meet the authorities **there yielded little result.**

The **funds for supporting the families of the Satyagrahis** and for running Indian Opinion were fast running out. Gandhiji's own legal practice had virtually ceased since 1906 (the year he had started devoting all his attention to the struggle). At this point, Gandhiji set up **Tolstoy Farm (1910).** The Tolstoy Farm was made possible through the generosity of his **German architect friend, Kallenbach,** to house the families of the Satyagrahis and give them a way to sustain themselves. Funds also came from India — **Sir Ratan Tata sent Rs. 25,000** and the **Congress and the Muslim League, as well as the Nizam of Hyderabad, made their contributions.**

Tolstoy Farm was the precursor of the later Gandhian ashrams that were to play so important a role in the Indian national movement.

### Truce period in Satyagraha

There seemed to be an **ephemeral truce between** the government and the resisting Indians from 1911 to 1912. It coincided with **the coronation of King George V.** Meanwhile, **Gopal Krishna Gokhale** paid a visit to South Africa, was treated as a guest of the Government and was made a promise that all discriminatory laws against Indians would be removed. The promise was never kept, **and Satyagraha was resumed in 1913.**

### CAMPAIGN AGAINST POLL TAX

In 1913, the Satyagraha was further widened to include resistance to **the poll tax of three pounds that was imposed on all ex-indentured Indians.** It was a very heavy charge on the poor Indians, since they hardly drew wages amounting to ten shillings a month. The resistance against the poll tax brought in all classes of indentured and ex-indentured

Indians into the struggle and thus the **Satyagraha now took a mass character.** The Indians, under the leadership of Gandhi, demanded for the abolition of poll tax.

### CAMPAIGN AGAINST INVALIDATION OF INDIAN MARRIAGES

The Supreme Court (South Africa) invalidated **all marriages not conducted according to Christian rites and not registered by the Registrar of Marriages.** This enraged all the people from Hindu, Parsi and Muslim community. The act **invalidated their marriages, eroded the sanctity of their rituals and beliefs and rendered their marriages illegal and their children illegitimate.** This judgment was an insult to the honour of their women and their dignity. Thus, many women too took part in the Satyagraha.

Gandhiji decided that the time had now come for the final struggle into which all the resisters' resources should be channeled. The campaign was launched by the **illegal crossing of the border by a group of sixteen Satyagrahis, including Kasturba, Gandhiji's wife,** who marched from Phoenix Settlement in Natal to Transvaal, and were immediately arrested. A group of eleven women then marched from Tolstoy Farm in Transvaal and crossed the border into Natal without a permit, **and reached New Castle, a mining town. Gandhiji reached New Castle and took charge of the agitation.**

The employers of the mines retaliated by cutting off water and electricity to the workers' quarters, thus forcing them to leave their homes. Gandhiji decided to march with an army of over two thousand men, women and children over the border and thus see them lodged in Transvaal jails. During the course of the march, Gandhiji was arrested twice, released, arrested a third time and sent to jail. The morale of the workers, however, was very high and they continued the march till they were put into trains and sent back to Natal, where they were prosecuted and sent to jail. The

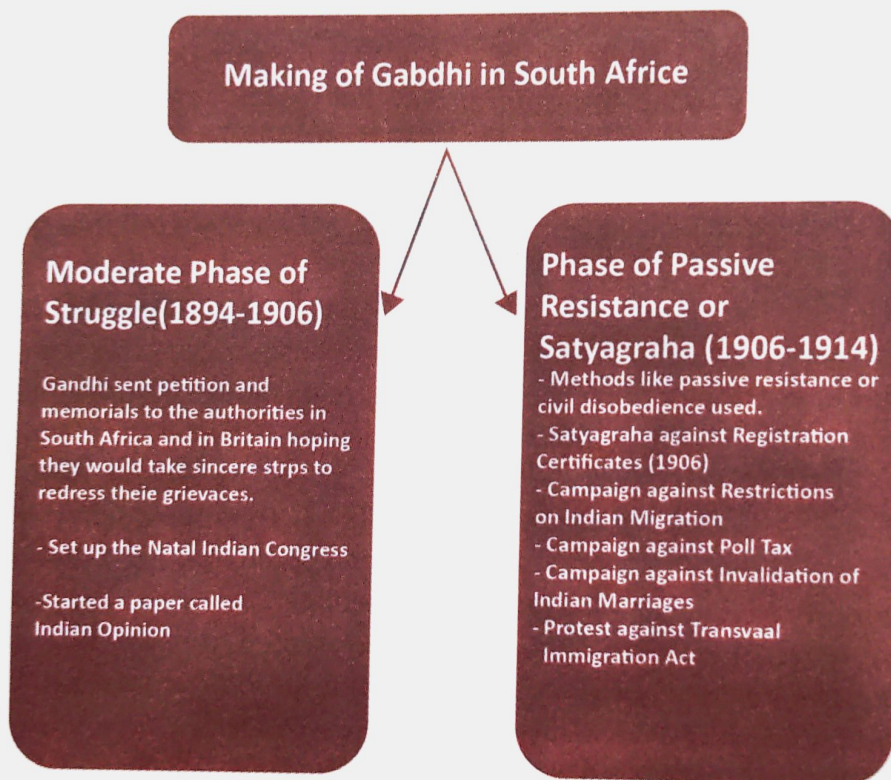


treatment in jail included starvation and whipping, and being forced to work in the mines by mounted military police.

The **Governments' action** inflamed the entire **Indian community**; workers on the plantations and the mines went on a lightning strike. **Gokhale toured the whole of India** to arouse Indian public opinion. Even **the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge**, condemned the repression as 'one that would not be tolerated by

any country that calls itself civilized' and called for an impartial enquiry into the charges of atrocities.

Eventually, **through a series of negotiations involving Gandhiji, the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, C.F. Andrews and General Smuts**, an **agreement was reached by which the Government of South Africa conceded the major Indian demands** relating to the poll tax, the registration certificates and marriages solemnized according to Indian rites, and promised to treat the question of Indian immigration in a sympathetic manner.



## ACHIEVEMENT OF GANDHI IN SOUTH AFRICA

- **Prepared Gandhiji for leadership of the Indian national struggle:** Gandhiji learnt how different classes of Indians showed grit towards a certain problem. He could assess the level of sacrifices they were capable of making, he could assess the unity with which they stood together for a common cause. He saw no difference between the courage of both the genders, men and women. **South Africa built**

**up Gandhi's faith in the capacity of the Indian masses** to participate in and sacrifice for a cause that moved them.

- **True character of Leadership:** He also learnt that a **leader not only has to face the wrath of the enemy but also the criticism of his own followers**, which one obviously needs to take with a pinch of salt. Thus, Gandhiji learnt that quite often than not most leaders have to take tough decisions that may be unpopular with their enthusiastic followers.



- **Style of politics and leadership:** South Africa provided Gandhiji with an opportunity for **evolving his own style of politics and leadership**, for trying out new techniques of struggle, on a limited scale. **He evolved the movement from its 'Moderate' phase into its "Gandhian" phase.** He already knew the strengths and the weaknesses of the Gandhian method and he was convinced that it was the best method around. It now remained for him to introduce it into India.

## GANDHI'S RETURN TO INDIA

Gandhiji returned to India, on 9th January 1915 (**Major reason why it is celebrated as Pravasi Bhartiya Divas in India currently**). He was warmly welcomed. His work in South Africa was well-known to Indian masses. Gandhi was advised by his **mentor Gopalkrishna Gokhale** to tour India for a year before embarking upon any political work.

Gandhi then **spent one entire year touring the country and studying all the situations with great care.** During this year, **he organised his ashram in Ahmedabad wherein he and his followers from S. Africa would lead a community life.** The next year as well, he continued to maintain his distance from

political affairs, including the Home Rule Movement that was gathering momentum at this time.

Gandhi's own **political understanding did not coincide with any of the political currents** that were active in India then. Over the span of two years, Gandhiji came to a conclusion that the only best way to tackle the colonial problem in India was Satyagraha. He didn't subscribe to the ideas of the Home Rule movement since he didn't find it quite right to revolt against the British especially when they were in difficulty because of the First World War. Also, **his faith in 'Moderate' means of struggle was totally eroded.** The Gandhian era is also known as the era of struggle.

Gandhi's reasons for not joining the existing **political organizations** just after his arrival in India can be explained **in his own words:** "At my time of life and with views firmly formed on several matters, I could only join an organization to affect its policy and not be affected by it. This does not mean that I would not now have an open mind to receive new light. I simply wish to emphasize the fact that the new light will have to be especially dazzling in order to entrance me."

In other words, **Gandhiji could only join an organization or a movement that adopted non-violent Satyagraha as its method of struggle.**



Maintaining distance from political affairs did not, however, mean that Gandhiji was going to remain **politically idle**. During the course of 1917 and early 1918, he was involved in **three significant struggles** — in **Champaran in Bihar, in Ahmedabad and in Kheda in Gujarat**. The common feature of these struggles was that they were related to specific local issues and that they were fought for the economic demands of the masses.

## GANDHI'S INITIAL MOVEMENTS IN INDIA

Gandhi's initial movements in India		
Champaran Satyagraha (1917)-First Civil Disobedience	Ahmedabad Mill strike (1918)-First Hunger Strike	Kheda Satyagraha (1918)-First Non-Cooperation

### Champaran Satyagraha (1917)– (First Civil Disobedience)

The **first act of civil disobedience of British rule** can be seen with the **Champaran (Bihar) Movement in 1917**. The Champaran movement tried to address the pathetic condition of farmers of Champaran, Bihar who were forced to grow indigo crops on a large scale.

The European Planters in the early 19th century had involved the cultivators of Champaran in agreements that **forced them to cultivate indigo on 3/20th of their land holdings (known as the tinkathia system)**. When these cultivators sought to be liberated from this obligation, the planters cunningly tried to turn the necessity of the cultivators to their own advantage and tried to secure **enhanced rents and other illegal dues as a price for the release**.

It was when Raj Kumar Shukla, a local cultivator, requested Gandhi to intervene in the matter that the events took a new turn. Raj Kumar Shukla's decision to get Gandhi involved in the question of the Champaran Peasants is indicative enough of the image Gandhi exuded in the minds of common men, that of one who fights for the rights of the exploited and the poor.

Gandhiji, upon his arrival in Champaran, was ordered by the Commissioner to leave Champaran immediately. Gandhiji **refused and preferred to take the punishment for his defiance of the law**. This was unusual, for even **Tilak and Annie Besant** (when Tilak and Annie Besant extended from a particular province, they obeyed the orders of the British).

The British government of India at that stage did neither treat Gandhi as a rebel nor did it want to invite any unwanted attention to the cause of Champaran. Thus, it **allowed Gandhi to stay and conduct his personal enquiry into the matter**.

Many people from the Bihar intelligentsia joined Gandhiji in his investigation of the peasants' grievances including **Brij Kishore, Rajendra Prasad, Mahadev Desai, Narhari Parikh and J.B. Kriplani**. Gandhiji along with his colleagues **toured the villages from dawn to dusk, interrogated the peasants and recorded their statements**, making sure that the information they were giving was true. Simultaneously, **the government had appointed a Commission of Inquiry to look into the matter and nominated Gandhiji as one of its members**. Gandhiji had statements of nearly 8000 peasants. Thus, there was enough and strong evidence with Gandhi to help him convince the commission that the **tinkathia system needed to be abolished** and that the peasants should be compensated for the illegal enhancements of their dues.

**Gandhi and the planters eventually came to a compromise that they'd refund only 25% of the money they had illegally exacted from the peasants**. According to Gandhiji, the refund had done enough damage to the planters' prestige and position. Also the invention of German synthetic dyes had forced indigo out of the market by the late 19th century. So, both the events (refund and invention of German synthetic Dyes) coupled together were reasons strong enough for the planters to close up shops and leave Champaran within a decade's time.

### Ahmedabad Mill Strike (1918)–



## (First Hunger Strike)

After the success of Champaran, Gandhiji turned his attention **towards the industrial workers of Ahmedabad**. A dispute between cotton mill owners of Ahmedabad and the workers over the issue of discontinuation of the **plague bonus was ongoing in Ahmedabad**. The mill owners wanted to withdraw the bonus. The **workers were demanding a rise of 50 per cent in their wages** so that they could manage in the times of wartime inflation (which doubled the prices of food-grains, cloth, and other necessities) caused by Britain's involvement in World War I.

The **British collector requested Gandhiji** to bring pressure on the mill owners and to work out a compromise. Ambalal Sarabhai who was a friend of Gandhi was also one of the leading mill owners of the town. She got into talks with Gandhi over the issue of the workers in Ahmedabad.

**Gandhiji persuaded the mill owners and the workers to agree to arbitration** through a tribunal, however, eventually the mill owners withdrew from the agreement. Mill owners rightly **offered a 20% bonus and threatened to dismiss anyone who doesn't accept it**.

The breach of agreement was treated by Gandhiji as a very serious affair, and he advised the workers to go on strike. Gandhiji further suggested, on the basis of a thorough study of the production costs and profits of the industry as well as the cost of living, that they would be justified in **demanding a thirty-five per cent increase in wages**.

Gandhiji would address the workers everyday on the banks of **Sabarmati River**. He requested the striking workers to not bring any physical harm to employers or blacklegs (people who worked even during a strike). Anasuya Behn (Ambalal Sarabhai's sister) was **one of the prime lieutenants of Gandhiji in this struggle**, in which her own brother was one of the adversaries. Unfortunately, the **crowd started showing signs of fatigue** eventually, the **number of attendees started declining at the meetings** and the attitude towards the blacklegs grew bitter and

hardened over time. This is when **Gandhiji resolved to go on a hunger strike, to rally the workers' spirits and to strengthen their resolve to continue**. The fast had the effect of **putting pressure on the mill owners** and they agreed to **submit the whole issue to a tribunal**. The tribunal awarded the **35% hike in wages that the workers had demanded**.

## Kheda Satyagraha (1918)–

### (First Non-Cooperation movement)

During his dispute in Ahmedabad, Gandhi also learnt about the plight of the peasants in the Kheda district of Gujarat. He learnt that they were in extreme distress due to crop failure and their appeals for the remission of land revenue to the government fell on deaf ears.

Enquiry into the matter by members of the **Servants of India Society, Gandhiji and Vithalbhai Patelji** confirmed that the peasants had a reasonable cause to appeal. That is, **since the crop harvest was less than one-fourth of the normal yield, they were entitled to a total remission of the land revenue under the Revenue Code**.

The **Gujarat Sabha**, presided over by Gandhiji, played a leading role in the Kheda agitation. **Gandhiji advised the peasants to withhold the revenue payments and to fight unto death against the tyranny and the despicability of the government**. **Gandhi wanted to demonstrate that it was impossible to govern people without their consent**. Hence this movement is termed as the **First Non-cooperation movement**.

**Vallabhbhai Patel** (a young lawyer and a native of Kheda district), and other young men, including **Indulal Yagnik**, joined Gandhiji in touring the villages and urging the peasants to stand firm in the face of increasing Government repression which included the seizing of cattle and household goods and the attachment of standing crops. The **cultivators were asked:**

- To take a solemn pledge that they would not pay revenue;



- Those who could afford to pay were to take a vow that they would not pay in the interests of the poorer ryots who would otherwise panic and sell off their belongings or incur debts in order to pay the revenue.
- If the Government agreed to suspend collection of land revenue, the ones who could afford to do so could pay the whole amount.

The government, later, had issued secret instructions that revenue should be recovered only from those peasants who could pay the revenue. A public declaration of this decision would have meant a blow to Government prestige, since this was exactly what Gandhiji had been demanding. Gandhiji understood this very well, also, he could sense the fatigue in the already weary peasants who were hard pressed because of the plague, drought and inflation. Thus, he gracefully withdrew the movement since what he had been demanding for had been achieved.

### Learnings from Champaran, Ahmedabad and Kheda

- **Satyagraha emerged as a main political instrument:** In all three places Gandhi made use of Satyagraha as the mode of political mobilization. Thus, Satyagraha became the model for further struggle with Britishers.
- **Inclusion of masses:** The movements in Champaran, Kheda and Ahmedabad were organized around local issues but Gandhi's intervention paved the ground for bringing masses into a broader political movement.
- Gandhi's charisma no doubt helped in acceptance of his leadership by the local people for their movement against oppression, but Gandhi also brought with him a new language of protest.
- **New Direction to political mobilization:** Rejecting violence as a form of protest and focusing on passive resistance, and moral force rather than physical force, as his political weapon Gandhi succeeded in giving a new direction to political mobilization.

## ROWLATT ACT

In 1919, the **Rowlatt Act or the Rowlatt Bills** were introduced in the Legislative Council that aimed at **severely curtailing the civil liberties of Indians under the garb of curbing terrorist violence**. It was passed in haste despite adequate opposition from the elected Indian members in the legislative Council. The passage of Rowlatt Bills **enraged the political class who were expecting a considerable constitutional concession from the government for the support of Indians to the British during the First World War**. All the elected Indian members of the Imperial legislative Council (**who included Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Madan Mohan Malaviya and Mazhar Ul Haq**) – resigned in protest.

The experience gained from Champaran, Ahmedabad and Kheda Satyagraha encouraged Gandhiji to step in. He suggested launching **Rowlatt Satyagraha**.

### FEATURES OF ROWLATT ACT

The Rowlatt Committee Act, named after its president Sir Sidney Rowlatt, was passed on the **recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee**. It authorised the **British government in India to imprison any person suspected of terrorism**. It was passed by the **Imperial Legislative Council** in March 1919. It was officially called the **Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act**. The features of the Act are as follows:

- The act allowed political activists to be **tried without Judges or even imprisoned without trial**
- It gave the police the **authority to arrest any Indians without warrant** on the mere suspicion of 'treason'.
- Such suspects (arrested on suspicion) **could be tried in secrecy without recourse to legal help**
- A **special cell consisting of three high court judges was to try such suspects** and there was **no court of appeal** above that panel.



- This panel of Judges could even accept evidence not acceptable under the Indian Evidences Act.
- The law of habeas corpus (the basis of civil liberty) was sought to be suspended.

### The Defence of India Act, 1915

Also referred to as the Defence of India Regulations Act, it was an emergency criminal law enacted with the intention of curtailing the nationalist and revolutionary activities during the First World War. The Act allowed suspects to be tried by special tribunals each consisting of three Commissioners appointed by the Local Government. The act empowered the tribunal to inflict sentences of death, transportation for life, and imprisonment of up to ten years for the violation of rules or orders framed under the act. The trial was to be in camera and the decisions were not subject to appeal. The act was later applied during the First Lahore Conspiracy trial. This Act, after the end of the First World War, formed the basis of the Rowlatt Act.

### IMPACT OF THE ACT

Soon, a Satyagraha Sabha was formed. The young members of the Home Rule Leagues were very eager to join the Sabha, they eventually reached out to almost all the erstwhile members of the Home Rule League, gathered men and began the propaganda. The impact of the act can be written as follows:

- **Largest mass movement against British rule:** The Rowlatt Act sparked the largest mass movement against British rule since the Revolt of 1857. It acted as a base for the movement for independence, which later spread throughout India and eventually led to independence.
- **Rowlatt Satyagraha was launched:** Gandhiji announced a nationwide hartal on April 6th in response to this act. The Rowlatt Satyagraha was the name given to this protest. Gandhi called the Rowlatt Act the "Black Act". Gandhi

organised a Satyagraha Sabha and brought in younger members of Home Rule Leagues and the Pan Islamists. Observance of a nationwide hartal (strike) accompanied by fasting and prayer and Civil disobedience against specific laws and courting arrest and imprisonment.

- **Signing of Satyagraha pledge:** People across India signed a Satyagraha pledge to follow a nonviolent path.
- **Rioting and violence erupted in Punjab:** Before the Satyagraha could be officially launched, there were large-scale violent, anti-British demonstrations in Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi, Ahmedabad, etc. Gandhiji was disappointed to see that Indians were not prepared for nonviolent protest, which was the core principle of Satyagraha. Therefore, he called for halting the Satyagraha movement.
- **Arrest of Dr. Satya Pal and Saifuddin Kitchlew:** On 10 April 1919, two Congress leaders, Dr. Satya Pal and Saifuddin Kitchlew, were arrested and taken to an unknown location as part of a protest movement. This caused resentment among the Indian protestors who came out to show their solidarity with their leaders. This protest turned into one of the most heinous tragedies under British rule known as the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

### JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE, APRIL 13, 1919

Rowlatt Satyagraha in Punjab was generally accompanied by violence and disorder. Also Punjab was suffering from the after-effects of severe war-time repression, forcible recruitment, and the ravages of disease. Punjab reacted strongly during Rowlatt Satyagraha and both in Amritsar and Lahore the situation became very dangerous for the British Government. Gandhiji tried to go to Punjab to help quieten the people, but the Government deported him to Bombay.

Events in Punjab started taking an ugly turn. On April 9, 1919, two nationalist leaders, Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal, were arrested by the



British officials without any provocation except that they had addressed protest meetings, and **taken to some unknown destination. The arrest** led to massive protests, including attacks on the town hall, post office and the Europeans including their women. Telegraph wires were cut. Eventually, **the army had to be called in and Punjab was handed over to General Dyer.**

The law and order in Punjab was handed over to **Brigadier-General Dyer.** He **issued a proclamation** on April 13 (Baisakhi day) forbidding people from leaving the city without a pass and from organizing demonstrations or processions, or assembling in groups of more than three.

**On 13th April 1919 (fateful day of Baisakhi, Punjabi New Year), a large crowd had gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh to attend a public meeting.** Many of the visitors were people from neighboring towns, having come over for Baisakhi Celebrations.

General Dyer was not happy at the idea that his orders were blatantly disobeyed. **He thus ordered his troops to fire upon the unarmed crowd without any initial warning.** The shooting continued for ten minutes. General Dyer was not deterred by the fact that the ground was totally hemmed in from all sides by high walls which left little chance for escape. Many including women and children were killed on one of the most barbarous days in history. **The entire nation was shocked by the Jallianwala Bagh incident.**

### **OUTCOME OF JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE**

The brutality at Jallianwala Bagh stunned the entire nation. For the moment, repression was intensified, Punjab placed under martial law and the people of Amritsar forced into indignities such as crawling on their bellies before Europeans. **Gandhiji, overwhelmed by the total atmosphere of violence, withdrew the movement (Rowlatt Satyagraha) on 18 April.** The withdrawal did not mean that Gandhiji had lost faith either in his non-violent Satyagraha or in the capacity of the Indian people to adopt it as a method of struggle. A year later, he launched another nation-wide struggle, on

a scale bigger than that of the Rowlatt Satyagraha. The wrong inflicted on Punjab was one of the major reasons for launching it.

### **The outcome of Jallianwala Bagh**

- **Inquiry Committee was set up:** The **Hunter Commission** was set up by the **British government** to investigate the massacre. General Dyer was then relieved of his duty in the army in 1920.
- **Giving up the titles:** Rabindranath Tagore renounced his **knighthood in protest.** **Gandhi gave up the title of Kaiser-i-Hind which he had earned in the Boers War.**
- **Ground for future Non-cooperation movement:** Gandhi declared that **cooperation with a 'satanic regime'** was now impossible. The Jallianwala Bagh incident prompted Mahatma Gandhi to launch the Non-Cooperation Movement in future.
- **Beginning of Punjab's politics of resistance:** The Lt. Governor of Punjab Michael O'Dwyer was later in 1940, assassinated by **Udham Singh in London** who had witnessed the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre as a child. The governor was assassinated because he was the one who approved the actions of General Dyer.

#### **Reaction of priests of Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar on Jallianwala Bagh incident**

The clergy of the Golden Temple, **led by Arur Singh, honoured Dyer by declaring him a Sikh.** The honoring of Dyer by the priests of Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, was one of the reasons behind reforming the management of Sikh shrines. This resulted in the launch of the **Gurudwara Reform Movement.**

#### **Various Reactions on Jallianwala Bagh Incident**

**Sivaswamy Aiyer**, a liberal lawyer (who was also bestowed with a knighthood by the government) **wrote a strongly worded article that called out on the inhuman atrocities** inflicted upon the people in Punjab.



### Rabindranath Tagore expressed— Rabindranath Tagore in a letter to the Viceroy

"The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in their incongruous context of humiliation, and, I, for my part, wish to stand, shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of my countrymen who, for their so-called insignificance, are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings."

### Mahatma Gandhi in Young India

"No government deserves respect which holds cheap the liberty of its subjects."

## THE HUNTER COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY

Around 1919, the British were already struggling with the wartime efforts. The British economy was strained. The British couldn't afford any more chaos that'd lead to law-and-order problems or economic drain. Thus the British government formed a committee of inquiry under the chairmanship of Lord William Hunter, to investigate the Jallianwala Bagh shootings. **The formation of the committee was ordered by the Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu.** The committee was **also known** as the **Disorders Inquiry Committee.**

**Purpose of the Committee:** Investigating the disturbances in Bombay, Delhi and Punjab, and their causes, and the measures taken to cope with them.

### Members of the Committee

**Chairman:** Lord William Hunter

**Legislative Council, United Provinces:** Thomas Smith

**Secretary of the Commission and Home Department member:** H.C. Stokes

**Three Indians among the members:**

1. **Sir Chimanlal Harilal Setalvad:** Vice-Chancellor of Bombay University and advocate of the Bombay High Court
2. **Pandit Jagat Narayan:** Lawyer and Member of the Legislative Council of the United Provinces

3. **Sardar Sahibzada Sultan Ahmad Khan:** lawyer from Gwalior State

### Findings of the Committee

The committee unanimously condemned General Dyer's actions.

- It reported that Dyer did not ask the crowd to disperse before opening fire and continued firing until ammunition was exhausted. This constituted a **serious error.**
- It condemned Dyer's intention of producing moral effect through the use of force.
- The committee reported that **there was no conspiracy** to throw British Rule from Punjab that had led to the assembly of people at Jallianwala Bagh.

### Findings of Indian members in the committee:

- **Order of Dyer** banning public meetings **was not circulated in Punjab properly** that could have prevented the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre.
- The crowd in Jallianwala Bagh consisted of innocent people and there was no violence before the massacre.
- Dyer should have either ordered his troops to help the wounded or instructed the civil authorities to do so.
- Dyer's actions had been **"inhuman and un-British".**
- Dyer's action had greatly injured the image of British rule in India

The **Hunter Committee did not impose any penal or disciplinary action against General Dyer.** In the end, **due to a decision taken by the British cabinet, Dyer was found guilty** of a mistaken notion of duty and **relieved of his command in March 1920.**

### Congress Response

The Indian National Congress appointed its own non-official committee that included **Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Abbas Tyabji, M.R. Jayakar and Gandhi** to look into the Jallianwala Bagh incident.